

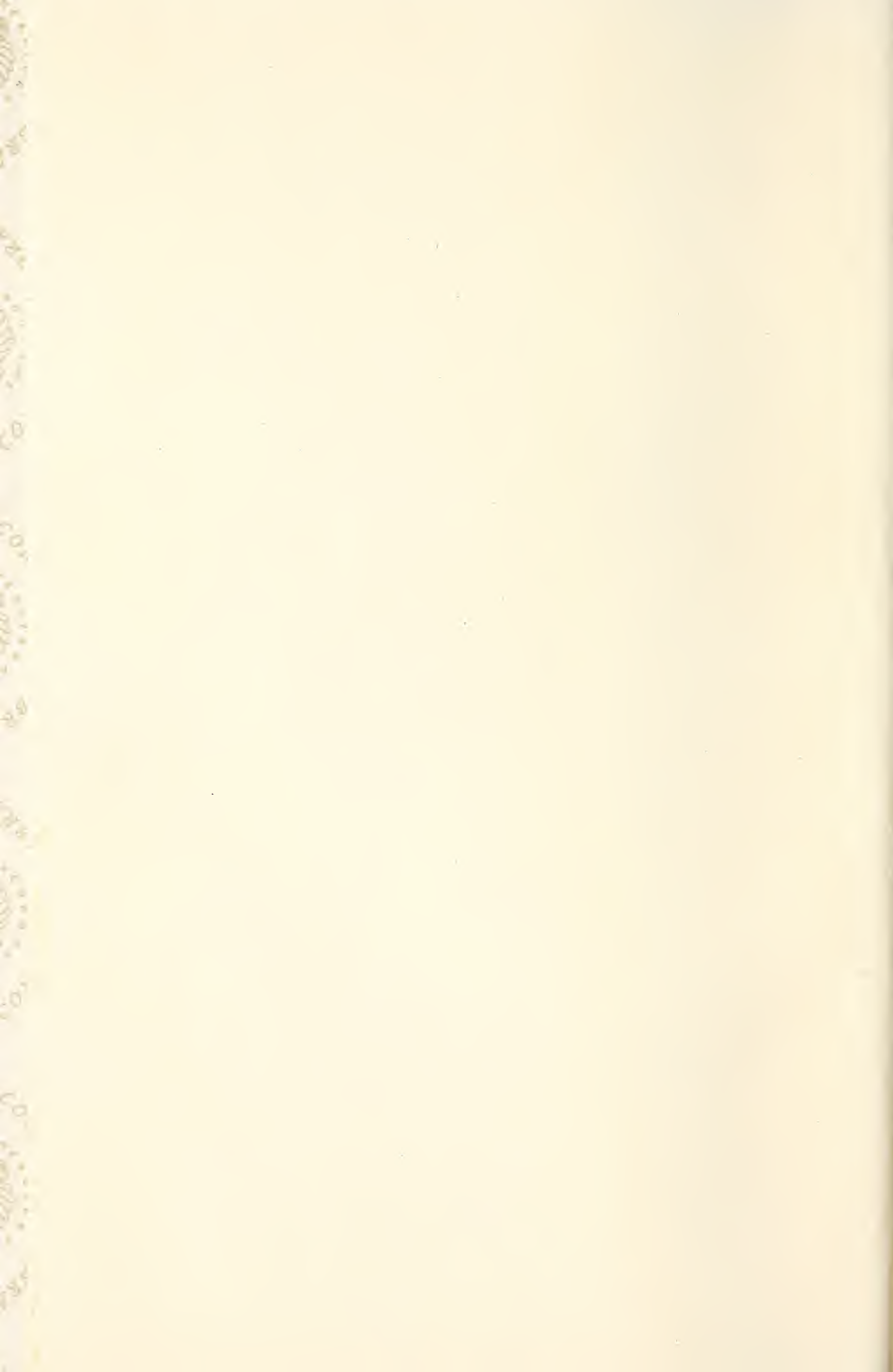
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1897







THE OPTIMIST.

BY
✓
CHARLES FREDERIC GOSS.



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THE ROBERT CLARKE COMPANY.

1897.

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PREFACE.

These brief essays were originally written for the columns of the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

They were prompted by the belief that the readers of daily papers can be interested in ethics as well as in politics—in the spiritual as well as the material phases of our existence.

These are, after all, the elements which possess an eternal fascination, and they are to be found in every incident of daily life, no matter how trivial.

What we lack is the power to discover them for ourselves, and we need the help of interpreters.

A corps of reporters trained to see and reveal these subtle but beautiful qualities, would build up the greatest newspaper in the world.

It was at the urgent solicitation of many friendly readers, who desired to place these secular sermons upon the shelves of their library, that the author consented to their re-appearance in permanent form.

C. F. G.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. What is an optimist?.....	1
II. The servant girl.....	5
III. The dilapidated coach.....	9
IV. How the old man has changed!.....	14
V. The game of marbles.....	18
VI. Old Uncle Ben.....	22
VII. The end of his rope.....	25
VIII. Mister, whip behind!.....	29
IX. The waste basket.....	32
X. Turn on the lights.....	36
XI. Jolly him up.....	39
XII. I appreciate you, Dobbin.....	42
XIII. Sand !.....	46
XIV. The two old street cars.....	50
XV. I'm in the swim.....	54
XVI. Coasting !.....	58
XVII. The flowers and the frost.....	62
XVIII. Mr. and Mrs. Recently Married.....	65
XIX. Burn your own smoke.....	69
XX. Would be, if I was at work.....	73
XXI. The scissors grinder.....	77
XXII. The treadmill of life.....	80
XXIII. Young Blunderbuss.....	84

	PAGE
XXIV. Little Bill's first day.....	87
XXV. The dandelion.....	90
XXVI. The robin.....	94
XXVII. The scorcher.....	97
XXVIII. The honey bee.....	101
XXIX. "It's a boy!".....	105
XXX. The foul tip.....	108
XXXI. I've got a cinch.....	112
XXXII. Keep sweet.....	116
XXXIII. Others shall sing the song.....	119
XXXIV. The pin prick.....	122
XXXV. Over the line.....	126
XXXVI. The optimist's corner.....	129
XXXVII. Eye-opener and night-cap.....	132
XXXVIII. Reminds me of a story.....	135
XXXIX. Mumble the peg.....	140
XL. Run-backs.....	143
XLI. Business is business.....	146
XLII. No gain except by loss.....	150
XLIII. Let me out at Shillito.....	154
XLIV. The parrot.....	157
XLV. The elderberry palace.....	161
XLVI. The sacrifice hit.....	165
XLVII. The snake and the toad.....	168
XLVIII. He lost his grip.....	172
XLIX. There are others.....	175
L. Here's a hoop to your barrel....	178
LI. Standing in your own light.....	182

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
LII. Thanksgiving day.....	186
LIII. The young aeronaut.....	190
LIV. The hot copper.....	194
LV. Get a move on you.....	198
LVI. Christmas.....	202
LVII. Tell a story, sing, or dance.....	206
LVIII. Bunch your hits....	210
LIX. Tighten your belt....	213
LX. All need and all help.....	219
LXI. You've got a punctyrè.....	220
LXII. The cinder path.....	223
LXIII. Mr. Phil. O. Sopher.....	226
LXIV. Our debt to the birds.....	230
LXV. Drawing the line.....	234
LXVI. Choose.....	238
LXVII. Straining at gnats.	242
LXVIII. The compromise.....	246

THE OPTIMIST.

I.

“GRANDMA, what ith a pethimitht?” asked little Jim, climbing into the old lady’s lap and putting a dimpled hand on either cheek.



“A what, dear?”

“A pethimitht and a optimitht.”

“Oh! An optimist is a man who is happy

(1)

when he is miserable, and a pessimist is a man who is miserable when he is happy," said grandma.

The old lady knew that, after all, there is not so much difference in the lots of men.

If there were an instrument delicate enough to measure the disappointments, losses and unrealized hopes in the lives of Sir John Lubbock and Schopenhauer, it would show a pretty even balance. Why, then, did life seem to the former a blessing and to the latter a curse?

Why does the same sun melt butter and harden clay? Why is the same food meat to one stomach and poison to another? Why is the same water death to the dove and life to the duck?

Answer these last questions and you can answer the first. If a man is noble and brave and trustful, he will be happy, even when he is miserable. If he is base and cowardly and suspicious, he will be miserable when he is happy.

Pessimism is always, in its final analysis, nothing more nor less than pusillanimity. It is the unwillingness or inability to stand up and make a manful fight against the doubts and despairs that hover around our immortal spirits in this life of mystery and sorrow. The final and consummate misery of pessimism originates in the delicious pleasures of melancholy. Name

me a state of mind more full of seductive and exquisite happiness than to be thoroughly miserable, to feel that you have no friends, that there is nothing worth living for, that there is no use in effort! The secret of that pleasure lies in the luxury of repose, of abandonment, of relaxation. In those soft hours we do not strive, we do not resist, we do not fight. He who thinks that every thing is bad and getting worse, is glad to see it so, whether he knows it or not, because it gives him an excuse for not being a victor through strife.

And through all his tragic experience, the failure and misery is simply in his own bosom, and not in the universe. Life satisfies and supports whoever has the inherent power to satisfy and support himself. All others it swallows into its bottomless depths as the sea buoys up the man who can swim and gulps down the man who can not.

This nerveless, purposeless fellow, thrown out into the sea of life, flounders a moment and then goes down like a stone. In a moment he reappears half strangled, flings out his hands, shrieks, and sinks again. Once more he rises, and, with one final gurgling curse upon the ravenous flood, vanishes forever.

But not far away from him a strong swimmer breasts the billows joyously, turns over on his

side, then on his back, and even floats without an effort, or possibly goes to sleep while doing so, as Franklin said he did for hours while swimming in the English Channel.

One gets tired of hearing the pessimist curse his life for being unsatisfactory, and would be glad to hear him curse himself for not knowing how to live it. It was a good enough world for Epictetus, the philosophic slave. Listen to him:

“Do you ask,” he said, “how is it possible that one can live prosperously who hath nothing—a naked, homeless, hearthless, beggarly man, without servants, without country? Lo, God hath sent you a man to show you in very deed that it is possible. Behold me, that I have neither country, nor house, nor possessions, nor servants. I sleep on the ground, nor is a wife mine, nor children, nor domicile; but only earth and heaven and a single cloak. And what is lacking to me? Do I ever grieve? Do I fear? Am I not free? When did any of you see me fail of my pursuit, or meet with what I had avoided? When did I blame God or man?”

II.

FOR six months or more the once joyous and hopeful Jimson had been steadily growing sour and melancholly.

One morning his neighbors, who rode down with him in the street car, observed a slight change for the better. On the day following the improvement was still more perceptible, his eye being a little clearer and his step a little lighter. On the third day his face was wreathed in smiles, he slapped them on the shoulders in the old familiar way, and said, "Good morning," like a school boy.

"What in the world has come over you?" they all inquired at once.

"I'll tell you," he replied. "For six months or more we have been changing servant girls almost as often as we have our linen. A long procession of them has filed in and out of our house, each one of them, according to her own particular g  nius, irritating some individual member of the household, or treading on all of our toes together. My wife has been worried to death, the children have been cross, the food unfit to eat, and every thing has gone to the dogs.

“Three days ago a young woman stepped into the kitchen and took hold of that establishment of ours, as a river pilot takes hold of a steamboat. The first meal that came on the table tasted like food used to at my old grandmother’s, when we little half-starved children sat down to the second table on Thanksgiving Day. She moved around the dining-room as quietly as a goldfish moves around in a glass globe. She spoke in a low, soft voice, and with the dim suggestion of a smile hidden somewhere and just ready to slip out upon her lips. She found no fault, said she was fond of children, and went about her work humming, almost inaudibly, little snatches from ‘Robin Adair,’ ‘Ben Bolt,’ ‘Flow Gently, Sweet Afton,’ and a dozen old songs that carried us back to the days of Auld Lang Syne.

“My eldest girl, who was just back from Vassar, and was supposed to hate ‘house-work,’ went into the kitchen and offered, of her own accord, to wipe the dishes. Little Bill hung around her, and asked her on the sly ‘if she could make cookies with caraway seed in them,’ and my poor wife sat right down on the rug in the library and had a good old-fashioned cry, muttering incoherently that ‘every cloud has a silver lining,’ ‘It’s always darkest before the dawn,’ ‘She was n’t worthy

of her mercies,' 'and if she lived, she was going to be a better wife and mother.'

"I tell you, boys, there has been a transformation in that house! And when I think what astounding results one single individual person can work in the comfort and, if I must say it, the morals of a family (for we were fast becoming heathens), I am dumfounded!

"There's that little Irish girl—who never went to school a solid year in her whole life, and who has no knowledge and no culture besides that of a sense of duty and a feeling of love—yet she just comes down on that domestic machine, rubbing and jarring and squeaking with friction, like a drop of lubricating oil of the milk of human kindness"—

"Mixed metaphor," whispered the literary editor.

"Mixed or not," continued Jimson, good-humoredly, "she has made us all over new."

"And now I want to say that I don't put a sweet-tempered, loving-hearted, helping-handed servant girl second to any class of people in this world, for the benedictions they shed on human life—and I won't except soldiers dying on the fields of battle, martyrs going to the stake, nurses ministering to the sick; ministers preaching, editors writing leading articles nor anybody else!"

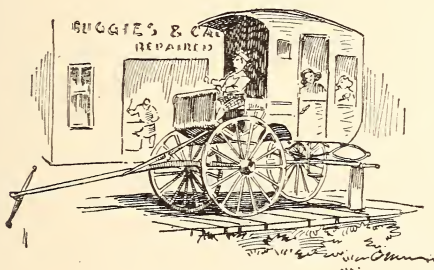
When they left the car each one of Jimson's three friends took him by the buttonhole, and whispered something into his ear.

They all asked the same identical question :
“ Say, Jimson, has she got a sister ? ”

III.

A DILAPIDATED old coach, having met with an accident, had been sent to the carriage-maker's for repairs.

It stood on the sidewalk in front of a shop on the Reading road. In the box was seated a bareheaded boy, stretching his hands out as



if grasping a pair of lines. On the patched cushions inside were three little girls, holding their dollies in their arms, and gazing at them or out of the windows, in a sort of rapture.

Although the wagon tongue lay idle on the ground, the little coachman could see four splendid horses galloping before him, and could feel the pull of the reins on his chubby palms.

Although the broken wheel was in the shop, and its tire lying red upon the anvil, it seemed to the little ladies that they were rolling over a magnificent boulevard in a primeval forest, and through a bewildering labyrinth of flowers, while birds sang from the trees and fountains plashed in marble basins.

The jaded roués, the miserable victims of ennui, the surfeited pleasure-seekers who passed now and then, might well have stopped to learn the secret of human happiness. Could these little philosophers have spoken, they would have said:

“Happiness in childhood springs out of a spontaneous, and in manhood out of an educated, imagination. The world is what it seems, not what it is. Life is rather what the soul reads into it than what it stamps upon the soul. See us! Here is a battered old coach standing on a plank sidewalk, in front of a weather beaten old carriage shop, beside a dusty road. It is rickety, a wheel is off, there are no horses, and yet every thing seems new and beautiful to us. Surely such old people as you are, who know so much more than we little children, ought to be able to drape the rough and ragged edges of life with beauty, and permeate a world like this with something of the joy that reposes in the immortal spirit.”

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings

hast thou ordained strength." "And a little child shall lead them." Let the great doctors in the temple listen to the voice of the heaven educated youth.

What is this world? What it seemed to Homer, or to Helvetius, or to Darwin? What is life? What it seemed to Solomon, or Isaiah, or Paul, or Nero, or Dante, or Goethe, or John Wesley, or Schopenhauer! Is it what the child thinks it, in the coach, or the youth upon the Commencement stage, or the old man upon the edge of the grave? The criminal thinks the world a jail, the merchant a shop, the priest a temple, the young mother a paradise, the widow a sepulcher.

And this is all because the soul suffers itself to receive, as upon a sensitive plate, the impression of the passing panels of the revolving panorama.

If it had the wisdom of the child, it would read its own self into those passing panels, and stamp the impress of its own immortal life upon them.

There is not a man living who does not testify to the child's philosophy by every hour of his life. The pleasure which the gambler derives from his painted cards and faro checks—is it real or imaginary? Do they arouse it in him, or does he read it into them?

When a young man drives his first team of

thoroughbreds, the joy he feels is no less the result of imagination than that possessed by the boys upon the box. To a soured old pessimist, a light buggy and two lumps of horse-flesh seem as little real ground for happiness as an antiquated old coach in a carriage shop.

And it is with our sorrow as with our joys. What makes the little coachman blubber now? It is because the old blacksmith has ordered him off the box. But in five minutes he will be just as happy making a mud pie in the gutter. What makes that man whom the sheriff has just ordered out of his office turn white and gasp for breath and clutch at his heart? In a year from now he will have decorated another office with his dreams, and be as happy in his hopes.

I say, with the children, that there is a power in the soul to make life what it chooses.

Since I have been a grown up man, I have had as much pleasure out of a \$15 Cayuse pony as Bonner ever had out of his \$100,000 horses. I can not own a Meissonier, nor a Bouguereau, nor a Millet; but I have two chromos of a black bass and a speckled trout, and I have waded in mountain streams while looking at them, as truly as the little coachman on the box drove through the forests of Wonderland, while gazing at his imaginary steeds.

Some men believe in the world. The little children believe in the soul. For one, I am trying to educate my imagination back to childhood. Little children are the only ones who really enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

IV.

A RURAL visitor in an art gallery was astonished and delighted by a painting of the majestic figure of Moses, the lawgiver. Having discovered the author, he gave him an order for a life-size portrait of his own father, who had been a long time dead.

"Have you a photograph of him?" inquired the painter.

"No; he never had one taken."

"Well, how do you expect me to paint a picture of a man I have never seen?"

"Did you ever see Moses?" inquired the surprised countryman.

The artist perceived the point, executed the commission, and summoned his patron to its inspection.

He looked at it a long time with rapt attention, and then exclaimed with a sigh, "Lord! how the old man has changed!"

Surely, this is going as far in adoration of art as the wildest and most exacting of the Modern Esthetes could demand. When a man is willing to abandon all the preconceived opinions of a lifetime, and renounce the impression made upon his mind's eye by the

daily vision of his father, because an artist tells him to, the motto, "Art for art's sake," has been carried to its utmost point of realization.

Absurd and impossible as the story seems, it is scarcely an exaggeration of the folly of multitudes of worshipers at the shrine of modern art, which demands of her votaries as their first offering, the sacrifice of every preconceived opinion on the subject of the beautiful.

The composer presents us with a wild rigmale of concatenated sounds, and when we protest that this is neither what we have heard "in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the water under the earth," he greets us with a smile of profound commiseration, and tells us that he has heard it in his own soul! There is nothing for us to do but to cry out with the credulous countryman, "Lord! how the old man has changed!"

The artist hangs before our astonished eyes a canvas containing a landscape with which we have been familiar all our lives. The hills, the lake, the forest are there in outlines vague and dim, but on them play lights which "never were on the sea nor land," and they are so altered by the freedom of his composition that we rub our eyes and think an earthquake must have altered the very face of nature. It is in

vain that we remonstrate. The hero of the brush belongs to the impressionist school. What he has put upon the canvas he has seen, and it is only a proof of our stupidity if we have not. What can we do but moan, "Lord! how the old man has changed!"

The novelist sends us a volume purporting to be a study of the old familiar scenes and characters of daily life. The people are as strange as the citizens of the other planet. They are animated by motives which are inadequate to their deeds. They mingle with each other on a plane of existence scarcely above the level of the brutes. The lower motives predominate, and passion is the theme to which the whole story is keyed. If we protest that we, too, have "seen the world," and that whatever else this drama is, it is not a representation of society as we have beheld it, the smile of compassion deepens into one of derision, and we are told that this is "real life," and that the novelist's business is to give us life as it is. And so we must bow to these High Priests of Art and solace ourselves with the exclamation of the astounded countryman, "Lord! how the old man has changed!"

Some of us are getting restive under this tyranny. We are willing to see in nature what some one else beholds, but we do not

care to be told that our own eyes are made of glass.

We are willing that "the old man" should undergo any natural evolution, but we refuse to have the artist put an entirely new head upon him and compel us still to call him father.

V.

THE ancient Egyptians attributed the coming of the spring to the rising of the Nile.

In America there are three powers instead of one that bring the vernal season to the earth, the robin, the small boy with his marbles, and the crocus.

The robin has done his part, the crocus is

yet to come, but the small boy with his marbles, is now putting his shoulder to the wheels and pushing on the revolving year. You may see him on every



corner, kneeling on the ground and sticking his marbles into that cabalistic circle which he has drawn in the dirt.

I hope I may be forgiven for envying him. All that we old fellows can do is to envy and remember. Our knees and thumb joints are too stiff for imitation.

It seems a long time ago that we ransacked our bureau drawers for the mislaid marbles, stuffed our pockets with them until they projected like the cheeks of a Satyr, and went forth to the practice of that immortal pastime. The boys who grow up in this region of mongrel winters, can not fully realize the strange wild flow of the sap of life in those more northerly latitudes, where the first warm day comes with a sudden surprise, melting the snow and laying bare the sidewalks. Then and there the whole boy nature opens and expands. There is an instantaneous rush of the currents of life, like that of the snow water in the street.

On such a day, in a little New York village, I used to open the door of the chicken-house and thrill with a sort of ecstasy as the barnyard fowls flew cackling and crowing over the intervening snow banks to the open spaces that steamed in the sun. Then the old cow marched out to the south side of the barn to chew her cud and blink in the warm rays, and the robins sang in the top of the old maple out of whose sides the sap was running into my little tin pail; and the old grandfather crept out from the shelter of the fireside to bathe his stiffening limbs in the balmy air.

But the greatest sight of all was the knots of boys who had brought the spring, playing mar-

bles on every fine spot on the sidewalk round the village square.

The boys are the real spring-bringers.

Many vernal seasons will they bring to earth, these little fellows over whom we stumble as we rush for the electric cars. In a few more years they will lay aside their marbles, snatch their paint brushes or their pens, their printing presses or their muskets, and, like the lads who ushered in the age of Pericles, or of the Renaissance, bring a new spring upon the heels of our winter of trial and doubt and despair.

On one of the battle-fields of the civil war, an old farmer showed me three marbles which he found in the pocket of a dead drummer boy.

Multitudes of these heroes who stopped those flying bullets, who won those terrible battles, and served their glorious nation, were none too old to play a game of marbles.

Step over those groups of marble players respectfully. Go round them deferentially, for in fifteen years or so they will be laying us old fellows quietly on the shelf, and stepping into the shoes out of which we slowly drag our unwilling feet.

So we treated our fathers, and so will we be treated by our children.

The new bud pushes off the old leaf.

The boy with his marbles presses into the counting-room, and forces the man with his account book into the vacant arm-chair in the corner.

But the world is the better for his coming.
He brings the spring.

VI.

AN old playmate of his told me that when "Uncle Ben" was a boy, his regular rations at school were two thrashings per diem.

To his own uncles he was an object of terror. They always examined all the chairs to see if he had "accidentally" left any bent pins on them.

But when little nephews and nieces began to call him "Uncle," every thing was changed, and the sap in his royal nature began to flow. They came to him, the little toddling things, as children go with their pails to the great maple trees which line the streets of New England villages.

At sight of him they crept away from their nurses, deserted their hobby horses, abandoned their marbles, and climbed upon him until he looked like a pyramid covered with roses.

"I'll tell my Uncle Ben," was the threat with which the little nephews terrified the "bullies" of the schoolyard.

"Uncle Ben would give me some," was the argument with which the little nieces extorted candy from their fathers in the village store.

"Uncle Ben, there was a big frost last

night; won't you take us nutting?" "Uncle Ben, the trout are biting over in the Chickapee river; will you go next Saturday?" "Uncle Ben, there's a Punch-and-Judy show down town to-day, and mamma won't let us go alone. You'll take us, won't you, Uncle Ben? We knew you would, dear Uncle Ben."

All that was thirty years or more ago, and now dear old Uncle Ben is sick. He has had a long, hard pull. For a year or more he has been on his little cot in the front chamber, old and deaf and helpless, with his long, white beard and his kindly eyes and his sunny smiles. Don't you worry about Uncle Ben. Love watches over him. All he has to do is to touch a little electric button at any hour of the day or night, and the whole family will turn out like a fire department.

On the wall over his bed he keeps the photograph of a very old and wrinkled woman. It is his mother—old Uncle Ben's mother; dead for half a century.

Uncle Ben has never forgotten his friends, and his friends have never forgotten him. Those nieces and nephews are fathers and mothers now, with troops of little children at their heels, and a little "Ben" in every family. And every Sunday, from all parts of the city, they come like pilgrims to the sacred

shrine, where old Uncle Ben lies calmly waiting for his summons.

They lay their flowers down upon his bed, stroke his silver hair, lift up the little grandnieces and grandnephews for a touch of his trembling hand, and have to be fairly driven out of the room by the nurse.

Some day, ere long, but not until the crocuses have bloomed, I hope, for he loved them so, four stalwart nephews will take the casket in their hands and reverently bear that noble form to its last resting-place.

And if they could, the true-hearted fellows would, I think, precede the spirit of the dear old man to the gate of the beautiful city and say to the aged porter: "If you are looking for some one to add the last drop of happiness to the cups of the little children who are playing in the golden streets, just open the gate for our old Uncle Ben."

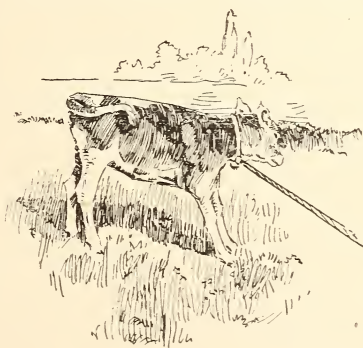
VII.

THE tropes and metaphors of the common people may be too vulgar for printed poems, but they are filled with those deep imaginations out of which all truest poetry is born.

"He has got to the end of his rope."

Ah, but that common and despised phrase is full of pictures! It is true that the pictures have slipped out of the frame of the words, but they are easily recovered. I see them now—a furious dog rushing the length of his

chain and strangling his neck with his collar—a calf with his face to the stake to which he is tied, four feet dug into the sod, head low down, and



bulging eyes rolled heavenward—an old horse standing in a circle of grass gnawed to the roots, and vainly trying to stretch a hemp rope, to

reach a tuft of clover with his flapping upper lip!

They have gotten to the ends of their ropes, poor things. It was such scenes as these that suggested to some forgotten poet of the common people the metaphor which I have chosen for our morning text.

We are each of us tied with a rope, and most of us, most of the time, are at its end. Sometimes it is funny, sometimes it is sad, and sometimes it is terrible.

Mrs. Higherup has been for ten years making the most comical efforts to get into the charmed circle of the four hundred, but she is tied by the rope of her bad grammar and her bad manners to the stake of a vulgar past. She has climbed to the last possible step she can take, she has come to the end of her rope.

Poor Jo Sandbagger (better known as No. 649) has been trying ever since he left jail to be a worthy man and find a place to earn an honest living, but, somehow or other, just as the prize is within his reach the rope tightens. God help him! for it seems as if man will not.

Young Highflyer never knew that he was tied at all. His parents gave him altogether too much rope. But the other day he found one end of it around his neck and the other around a gallows.

Yes, there are mortal limitations on us all. We can range a little way, and then the rope tightens and we hear the mysterious and unwelcome voice, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

Some of us are struggling after a senatorial chair, but our rope only reaches to an alderman's footstool! It is our inability to grasp political combinations that holds us back. Some of us are trying to accumulate a fortune, but a too great love or a too great fear of speculation prevents us and makes it uncertain whether we shall even attain a competence. Some of us are trying to make the world better by inaugurating new reforms or upholding ancient institutions, but physical weakness, or mental poverty, hampers our progress.

The world is full of patient toilers and eager strugglers, who admit with a sigh or lament with a groan that they have gotten to the end of their ropes. Their resources are exhausted. They are doing as much—they have gone as far—as they can.

Well, what would you be? Gods? To be finite is to be limited—to be tied with a rope! And no matter how long a man's rope is, it has an end. Moses got to the end of his rope when his heart broke in the mountains of Nebo. Shakespeare got to the end of his rope when he produced "Hamlet."

Our ropes are a little shorter than theirs, but I fancy they suffered as much when they got to the end of them. Let us all work up to our limits. Let us strain our cords and bands to the utmost tension.

The more we feel them hold us back, the gladder we shall be when the third one of the Weird Sisters cuts the thread and lets us go.

VIII.

SCHOOL was out.

The Reading road was full of children, laughing and shouting; little girls with their arms around each other's necks; little boys with their hands in each other's hair; hundreds of them, thousands of them, millions of them—or, at least, it seemed so, as they darted here and there like a school of minnows in a pond.

An enormous furniture van was moving up the street, the big Percheron horses pounding the pavement with their enormous feet, and the driver, bare-armed and burly, holding the reins and a long whip in his hand.

Suddenly a cry arose, "Whip behind! whip behind! Mister, whip behind!"

I followed the direction in which full twenty score of chubby fingers pointed, and saw, snugly ensconced in the open spaces between the chairs and tables at the rear of the load, three little grinning urchins.

The driver stood up and looked over the top of the load, but could see nothing. He leaned around the side of the wagon and gazed. It was in vain.

His resources, however, were not exhausted.

Unfurling his long lash, he swung it out into the air and curled it behind him with an almost divine skill, exploding the snapper close to the ears of the little steal-a-riders, who mocked him villainously.

Afterward he sat down, observing as I did, no doubt, that the wagon stood the extra load well, and that the great Percherons did not feel the weight.

But the cry resounded again in the street, "Whip behind! Whip behind, mister, whip behind!"

"Fine example of public spirit," I said to myself. But as I listened and looked again and again, I seemed to detect a tone of envy in the cry.

"Ah," I reflected, "is it possible that these illustrious young citizens wish themselves in the places of the steal-a-riders, after all, and would they take them if they could, and are they only too lazy or too infirm to steal a ride themselves?"

Forthwith there rose before my view the great van of the Government, and Uncle Sam, the driver, and I heard the cries of patriotic citizens by the roadside, "Whip behind! Whip behind, mister, whip behind! The monopolists are stealing a ride!"

I looked, and saw a few steal-a-riders, tucked

away in soft berths, out of the reach of your uncle's whip.

"Down with the privileged classes," cried the wayfarer on the highway. "Put them off. Cut behind!"

"Is it unselfish patriotism," said I to myself, "or is it some laziness and envy?" Would they, too, like a ride behind? I wonder why they do not take it. There seems a world of room. The van is large, the horses strong, the driver kind.

Why not jump aboard, instead of pulling down the men who catch the rides?

When I was a barefooted schoolboy, we used to sing a song, two lines of which I have never forgotten :

"Come along, come along, don't be a fool;

For Uncle Sam is rich enough to send us all to school."

I believe that! I believe in our natural resources, our republican institutions, and the integrity of the people. I believe in the big van, the big horses, and the kind driver. I think that what we need is not to prevent a few bright fellows from riding, but to jump aboard ourselves and pull up the weak and the poor and the unfortunate.

The great van of prosperity is coming down the road. I hear the rumble of the wheels. Get aboard!

IX.

“I FEAR that the work of the twentieth century will consist in taking out of the waste basket a multitude of excellent ideas,

which the nineteenth century has heedlessly thrown into it.”



If these words had been uttered by some timid, backward-looking theologian, they would have no more import than their pleasant picturesqueness gives them.

But they were spoken by Ernest Renan, not long before his death!

They must have cost him a qualm, for he was busier than any other man, through his

long and ardent life, filling the waste basket higher and higher with those same "excellent ideas," which the next generation must fish out of its capacious jaws.

How joyously did he and his confrères heap it up with those "childish superstitions," of "miracles," and "divine lives," and "inspired books," and "revelations," and "resurrections," and "ascensions." We can still hear the echoes of their voices as they pursued their work of demolition and destructive criticism, crying, "Take this rubbish away!" Those were great days in the early lives of Strauss and Renan, of Huxley and Tyndall, when they entered the libraries and laboratories of the ages, and, half blinded with dust, gathered up those crass theories of uncivilized barbarians and flung them, heap on heap, into the great catch-all.

And now the reaction has set in, as it always does after every iconoclastic outburst, when men sit down to count the cost of their horse play, and see how the temple of civilization looks when its statues have been torn from their niches.

Our grandfathers and grandmothers carried their spinning wheels, tall clocks, knickerbockers, and variegated silks up into the garret. We climb the creaking stairs, brush off the dust, rescue those faded treasures from obliv-

ion, and either restore them to utility, or use them for ornaments. Such is the vibration of the pendulum of fashion, such the rhythmic movement of human life. And so the waste basket is not only a tomb of burial, but of resurrection, and out of it, ideas and institutions have come forth on the third day or in the third generation, to a new and larger life.

The materials that are cast into the rag bag are drawn forth and carried to the paper mill, from which they reappear purified and transformed.

Did you think that every thing in the waste basket was gone for good and all? It was in a waste basket in the Sinaitic monastery that Titiendorf found that precious manuscript of the New Testament. How many times the idealism of Plato has been thrown into the waste basket, only to be fished out again like a recovered pearl of greatest price.

Men have been throwing the great doctrines of the Christian Church into the waste basket for centuries, and their children, groping in the rubbish, drag them out into the light with songs of triumph.

This work of rescue, predicted by Renan, has already begun, and the twentieth century has not yet dawned.

Patient historical criticism and a profounder and better philosophy are setting the old truths

in a new light. They are removing the false and deceptive characters which overlie the sublime originals on these ancient palimpsests.

Multitudes of men who have laughed scornfully, as the destructive critics cast aside the sacred beliefs in our immortality, our God consciousness, and the divine incarnation, are already groping in agony after the despised faiths, for they are learning that life is unendurable without them.

"I fear," said Renan (but I rejoice), "that the work of the twentieth century will consist in taking out of the waste basket a multitude of excellent ideas (truly excellent ideas), which the nineteenth has heedlessly (very heedlessly) thrown into it."

X.

TURN on the lights!

This is the motto of modern Christianity. Its adherents are no longer afraid of the most searching investigations.

There is something startling about a blinding gleam of light shot into an obscurity where we are performing a task, no matter how pure and good it may be. I have seen a group of people jump from a hotel porch when the searchlight of a passing vessel was thrown upon them, as if they had been stealing.

When that great searchlight, "modern criticism," first fell upon the defenders of Christianity, it gave them a stupendous shock. In its brilliant rays we all saw much that we had never seen before, and, turning like startled and foolish children, we blamed and feared the light.

But now there is no true Christian scholar who has not outgrown the idea that there is any thing in Christianity too sacred or too weak to bear criticism.

As for the Bible, it is either a true revelation of the nature of man and of God, or it is not. If it is, it will stand all the light that can be

thrown upon it. If it is not, the sooner we know its real nature the better. This is the cool and imperturbable conclusion of every sane mind.

The Bible is the crystallized wisdom of the most highly spiritualized men of the human family, and, like a great diamond, receives, purifies, intensifies, and casts back all the light thrown upon it.

Scientific and historical criticism have done their worst, and are now doing their best, for this sacred volume.

Multitudes of the noblest and strongest minds of the world have accepted every demonstrated conclusion of modern scholarship, and are still leaning hard upon this venerable book for comfort and wisdom in the struggle of life, although the "constructive work" of the reverent students has not yet been completed. Thus has this wonderful volume emerged from another, its hardest, and I believe, its last, onslaught.

Hitherto it had been attacked by its enemies; but this time, by its friends. It crushed the one, and it has triumphantly enslaved the other, riveting upon them anew its bonds of beauty and of power.

"Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences go on increasing in depth and breath, and the human mind expand as it

may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it shines forth in the Gospels," said Goethe.

"Though I am a Helene at heart, the book has not only well entertained me, but also edified me. It is the book of books," said Heine.

In these and similar words have the great men of all ages paid their tribute to the "Word of God." The man who wishes to nullify its power by *means* of modern scholarship must not forget that at last he must do so in *spite* of modern scholarship.

Most of its opponents are not firing at its living defenders, but at ghosts who haunt its cemeteries. It is a senseless cannonade. Ghosts can neither fight nor be hit. The lights have been all turned on, and still the sun outshines them.

XI.

“**W**HERE are you going with that great basket?” I said to my friend Will Sunshine.

“Oh,” he answered, “I am just going down to ‘jolly up’ our old janitor, who broke his arm last week.”

Shall I tell you how to spend to-day?

Just take it for granted that every man you meet is carrying a heart full of care and do your best to “jolly him up” a little.

Of course it will cost you a struggle. You have your own worries. You need to be “jollied up” yourself, if anybody does. With a sick wife at home, a note coming due to-morrow with not a dollar in bank, last month’s rent still unpaid, your little Jim going to school with a hole in his pants and your own coat getting



threadbare and shiny, you need to be "jollied up" yourself.

If any one in the world has an excuse for putting his hat over his eyes, and turning his back when he sees poor Jenkins coming along with his woe-begone face, or Dobson with his tale of the wrong that was done him when a younger man was put in his place and his salary cut down—you are the man!

But no matter. This is an off day, and you are to try an experiment. You are going to think about other people's troubles and not your own.

Dobson and Jenkins need to be "jollied up," and you are the man to do it. Crowd your own worries back into your heart. Straighten out that wrinkled forehead. Get that old smile back upon your lips once more. Out with your strong right hand and give them a grip, the memory of which they will carry until they go to bed, and dream of it in their sleep. Poor fellows, they are having a hard time, both of them going down hill! You may not think it, but a real bracing word and a friendly smile from you will make the whole world look different to them.

And now be careful! That old worried look is coming back upon you, your thoughts are turning in upon yourself again, and it is not yet 10 o'clock. Why, man, you will meet

twenty other people before supper time that need to be "jollied up" almost as much as they! To-morrow, if you want to sag back into the old brooding, bothering, worrying life, I have nothing to say. But to-day you are not to let a single person come near you without catching some uplifting inspiration from you.

Of course they will go home and say to their families: "I met an old friend of mine to-day, and he is one of those lucky dogs that never had a trouble in his life."

But what if they do? It's better than to have them tell their wives that they met you and had a chill after you parted. What difference does it make to you if people do think you never knew what trouble meant?

You do know that you are bearing it like a man, and may God bless you for it. Keep it to yourself. Do not try to win sympathy by displaying it. You will not get it if you do. People do not want a melancholy, whining fellow around.

"Laugh, and the world laughs with you,
Weep, and you weep alone."

Remember, now. You are going to keep it up all day! Every single person you meet is going to be happier for the meeting. Jolly them all up a little!

XII.

“**I** WANT to see you a minute,” said the head of the firm.

Dobbin was a timid, self-depreciating fellow, and entered the private office with fear and trembling.

“Dobbin,” said the old man, “I have been watching you closely. You are an honest and faithful man, and I appreciate you. I have raised your wages. Here is your salary. Good night; God bless you, Dobbin.”

When he reached home he rushed into the little sitting-room, and cried, “Jane, the governor said he appreciated me. What do you think of that? He appreciated me!”

“What do I think of it?” said Jane. “I think it’s about time. And, what’s more, if he does appreciate you, why didn’t he raise your wages?”

“Oh!” exclaimed Dobbin, clapping his pocket, “he did. I forgot that. It was so pleasant to be appreciated!”

“You poor, dear, simple-hearted old thing,” said Jane, putting her arm around him, “take that, and that, and that.”

There is a threefold craving in the human

heart—for praise, for approbation, and for appreciation.

Praise is always personal. We love it because it flatters the ego. It is invariably dangerous, and generally hurtful. Approbation covers the action performed, the thing done. It implies a formal sanction of an effort or a series of efforts, no matter from what motive performed. Appreciation is a subtle perception of our purpose, our desire—the motive, the deep, abiding disposition of a true and loving heart.

It gives us the most real pleasure which we ever enjoy, for we instinctively love to be known as we are, when we try to be what we ought.

Appreciation requires sympathy and love in the one who gives it. Even the exquisite beauty of a rose can only be appreciated by one who gazes at it with tenderness and affection. "All true appreciation is the result of keen insight and noble passion," says Blackie in his great essay on self-culture.

The desire for appreciation is one of the most elemental, and also one of the most underfed, appetites of the human soul. How many faithful, devoted, unselfish people there are in this world, who toil on and drudge on without the divine satisfaction of that yearning hunger!

There are so many who know they do not deserve praise, and who have scarcely merited approbation. They are not highly endowed with great talents. They have tasks to perform which are so far above them that probably they do not do them as well as they ought to be done. Perhaps they are physically unfit for them. Perhaps they have great burdens of sorrow upon their hearts which crush their energies. But they have been doing their best! And they feel that any one who has done this has done all that any one ever does.

If ever the moment comes when some one stops to look into such a heart with "the keen insight and noble passion" which detects the real motive and nature of such a suffering soul, and speaks but a single word of true appreciation, that word comes like manna from heaven, like a cup of cold water to a traveler in a desert.

Let us remember this noble hunger. And let us remember that floral tributes banked around a coffin will not satisfy it. It is the hunger of a living, throbbing heart, not the emptiness of a dead one. There is no nobler philanthropy than feeding that hunger. Perhaps you say with bitterness, "There is no one who needs it more and who receives so little as I myself." Well, it is more than likely.

But do not demand it. Do not ask for it. Do not even hint!

Appreciation and sympathy are two birds that were never overtaken by a hunter nor caught in a snare. When they come, they open the door of the cage and enter, all of their own accord.

XIII.

THERE is an instinctive love of clean dirt
in the bosom of every noble man.

Out of the dust we are made. In our lives we have eaten and assimilated a portion, perhaps, of every cosmic substance. We are of the earth earthy.

To the dust we must return, and there are moments of weariness when it is sweet to think of being

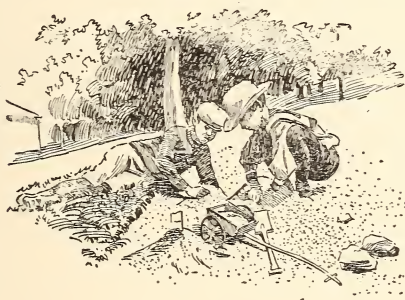
“ Brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share and treads upon.”

A distinguished physician says that much of our metropolitan nervousness and lack of power is because we step altogether on carpets and stone pavements, and do not draw up through our root-like feet the energizing elements of the soil.

Those of us who have followed the plow barefooted through the long furrow and felt the cooling, tranquilizing, rapture-stirring touch of the moist earth, as we dug our toes into the loose mold, are easy converts to that view. Who was ever so happy and so strong as when

he thus walked whistling behind the plow, watching the meadow moles and meadow larks?

The country boy shapes wet clay into forms of living things, rejoices that he has already eaten his "peck of dirt," rolls in the soft sand by the marge of the lake before plunging into the flood, and loathes to wash his feet, covered with stone bruises and grime, in the cold water dipped up from the wellhouse spring, when starting off to bed.



The city boy must get his sand in the pile before a new building, now and then. As bees find flowers, pigeons corn, and sparrows crumbs, the little gamins find sand piles and the smeared mortar mixer who swears at his mates winks at their petty larceny when they smuggle off the sacred stuff in their distended pockets. Little children need more sand, and so do those of larger growth. The greatest man is he of the most sand.

When the chicken's digestion wanes, he puts more sand in his crop. When the great drive-wheels on the locomotive of the "G Whizz" slip on the wet tracks of a steep grade, the fireman puts more sand on the rails. What the average man needs is "more sand!"

Will power, energy, purpose, are all called by the hard name "grit," and grit is sand.

"Grit is the grain of character. It may be generally described as heroism materialized; spirit and will thrust into heart, brain and backbone," said E. P. Whipple.

The virtue of the Sheffield cutlery is due chiefly to the fine grit in the grindstones on which it is sharpened. Grit sharpens wit.

The sine qua non of human life

Is hard, siliceous grit.

Without it, no one can win the fight

Nor conquer a little bit!

If there ever was a time when men have needed "sand" more than in this year of grace 1896, history has not recorded it. There are more men puffing up a steep grade on slippery rails to-day than we think. Not only are the wheels whirling without gripping the track, but the brakes themselves won't hold. The only thing that can keep them from slipping backward into the ditch is "sand." Do not spare it, men! Put the last grain of it on the rail, open the throttle and let her go! It may be

that one final pull will bring you over the top of the hill.

What a superb quality "sand" is! Something of it is seen in the bulldog, the gamecock and the racehorse. But as the light in the fungi and liverwort, the firefly and the glow-worm, is lifted into perfection in a star, so this quality of invincible purpose becomes climatic in man.

Without it, manhood is mere human pulp. If softening of the brain is the most pitiful of all human infirmities, softening of the backbone is the most base.

Sand is good; but if the sand has lost its savor, wherewithal shall it be sanded?

XIV.

“LAY out 84 and 96,” said the Boss, as the tired horses dragged a couple of street cars into the big barn.

“What’s the matter with them?” asked his assistant, looking them over with a critical eye.

“Played out,” replied the Boss, shaking the loose dashboard with his hand, and kicking the rusty wheels with his foot.

The hearts of the two old cars sank into their boots, as they were trundled away into a dark corner.

Standing there side by side, they exchanged many sad and some very bitter words.

“No more gay runs down the long grade into the busy city. No more swift whirls around Fountain Square. No more crowds of happy children, lovely women, and brave men—nothing but silence and idleness and misery until we rust and rot and crumble back to dust,” said Eighty-four.

“It is the way of the world,” muttered Ninety-six, through his half-closed door. “‘Off with the old and on with the new.’ I am as stout as I ever was; but just because I rattle a little and am slightly weather-stained, I

must be thrown into this dark hole, while that impudent, smooth-faced, freshly painted No. 99 is petted and admired and given the favorite run."

After long months of silence and idleness had passed by, the two old cars were frightened all but to death at hearing the sound of approaching footsteps and voices.

"Bring out 84 and 96," cried the Boss.

"What for?" asked his assistant.

"Sold," he answered.

The poor old things trembled and creaked and would have wept if they could, but their eyes were dry and full of dust.

"Good-by," they cried to each other, as they were coupled on to strange and unknown monsters, which ran without horses or mules, and pulled off in different directions.

Bounding along the rails, trembling in every joint, terrified by the awful speed, they gave themselves up for lost, and frantically speculated upon the nature of their impending doom.

After a journey which seemed both as long as eternity and as quick as a flash of lightning, "Eighty-four" found himself at the junction of Mitchell avenue and the Carthage pike, and, by the aid of stout horses and skilled men, was shunted off at the side of the road and left in a driving rain.

"What new misery of idleness awaits me?" he murmured to himself.

Suddenly a car stopped, and a dozen passengers stepped out in the mud.

"Hello!" cried one, "here's old 'Eighty-four' standing by the side of the road, with his doors wide opened, ready to welcome us out of the rain. Many a ride I had in him in the old times. Thought he was gone the way of all the earth. Tumble in every body and get out of the wet. Old cars are good for shelter, even when unfit for travel."

A sudden throb of joy in the heart of the old car made the people think he was starting.

And as for Ninety-six, they put him off at Ridgeway avenue, hauled him laboriously up the hill and placed him in a dooryard under the trees.

Never in all his life had he received such a welcome! Not even when he whirled up to Fountain Square in a driving rain! Not even when he had waited patiently an hour beyond his time to catch the last group of hurried Avondalians who had been to the May Festival!

Four little boys who lived in the house under the eaves of which he stood, danced and sang, their little companions whooped and yelled, and they all ran in and out and climbed onto the seats and clattered over the floor until old

Ninety-six lost his spectacles and his front teeth, and thought the end of the world had come.

"What a playhouse it is!" they cried.

"Let's call it Grandpa Lodge," suggested a little girl. And now the old street car, worn out and faded, is happy because he has found his mission.

Any one who is useful, ought to be happy. All can be useful if they try. We do not always have to joggle and bob and rush and tear to be useful. We can be useful when sheltering weary strugglers in our hearts of sympathy and holding little children in our hearts of love.

XV.

“**W**HERE are you going, and what are you going for?” shouted the cheese-box which was floating in a little bay, to a barrel which was tearing down the current of the great river.

“I don’t know,” it replied wildly, “but ‘I’m in the swim,’ and I’m happy.”

Logs and casks and boxes and every sort of drift-wood were bounding around it, and bumping against it. It rolled and tumbled and swayed amidst the debris, and swept onward toward the great ocean, with a smirk upon its face, which only at the corners of its mouth and to the shrewdest observer, revealed a dissatisfaction and doubt, as to the real sweetness of its pleasure.

In the meantime the poor little cheese-box, caught in an eddy, went round and round and round, envying the barrel with all the energy of its nature, and saying bitterly, “There goes the barrel on its brilliant career, passing through all sorts of excitement, and beholding every variety of scenery. But here am I, in the grasp of this spiral current, my orbit growing narrower with every revolution, shut up in this

trifling bay, and chained to a stupid, wretched existence."

No one ever told the cheese-box that just as the barrel rounded the next turn in the river, the bow of a passing steamer struck it and knocked it into smithereens. But, even if they had, the cheese box would probably have said, "Better death in the swim than life in the eddy!"

Everywhere in the world the cheese-boxes in the eddies, envy the barrels in the swim, and, therefore, there must be something divine in that impulse that drives us all imperiously toward the center of the great stream of tendencies, and makes us wish to be in the midst of the excitement, struggle, danger, and even tragedy of life.

There must be currents setting somewhere. There must be great general tendencies and movements toward some end or destiny. If every individual was a unit, independent in its disposition and desires from all others, moving off in its own orbit, repelled and repellant, how could this common destiny be achieved?

There is a necessary suction power in this current, or an impulse in the individual toward it. Men rush toward great centers as the atmosphere rushes toward a great conflagration or moths to an electric light. There is a certain fascination and bliss in yielding to an impulse

or to a current, as in giving way to a passion or floating down a river.

It is useless to deny that there is pleasure in being in the swim in politics or business or society. What! Pleasure in being banged about, and battered up, and crowded down, and jostled and swept along by irresistible currents toward unknown goals, and, perhaps, like the barrel, to be smashed or swamped in a moment? Yes. You remember the Englishman who examined his bloated face in the mirror in the morning after his wildest debauch, and, while acknowledging the misery and wretchedness of it all, exclaimed: "But it's life, damn it, it's life!"

Life? Death, I say.

But what pleasure there is, let those have it who want it. I shall not quarrel with them. I do not like the bitter taste it leaves in the mouth. I do not like the rivalries and jealousies, the alternations of hope and despair, the slow and horrible revelation of the emptiness of the struggle for prominence, even when there is no self-reproach and remorse.

I like my quiet little bay, and the eddy that carries me round and round, the sight of the old familiar scenes and faces, the calm, the repose, the flowers that nod over the edges of the bank, the time to remember, to grow better and to cherish hope. I am not disturbed when the

barrels put their fingers in their eyes and call out, as they scurry past: "Sour grapes! Sour grapes!" I only hope that some of my friends who are in the swim, and have lost their heads in the swollen current, will be caught by the saving hands of some gentle eddy, as I have been. I think that even if I were drawn out into the great stream I had rather creep along the shore.

I do not believe that death in the swim is better than life in the eddy.

XVI.

WHEN Jones was buying his new bicycle, the dealer told him he did not need a brake.

"How do you get down hill?" Jones asked.

"You just back pedal," said the voluble young salesman.

"Oh."

And so when Jones came to a hilltop, after "blowing" himself all but to death in the painful assent, he smiled to think of the pleasure which lay before him. It was his last smile for more than three weeks.

The first thing he did when he began to go down hill was to lose his pedal.

"Well," said he to himself grimly, "if I can't back pedal, I can 'coast.'"

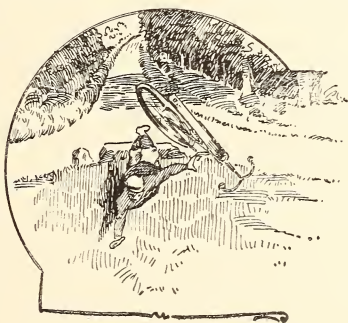
Now, the two prime factors in the problem of coasting are, the grade, and the bottom of the hill. Poor Jones knew nothing about either, for he had never traveled that road before.

The hill was long and steep. He was going like a train of cars. He tried to "break" with his foot, but did not know how. He was getting all the coasting he wanted, and a little more.

"I wonder what kind of a bottom there is to it?" he moaned. "If there is a river round that bend or a stone fence, I'm a goner. I hope it's an easy curve or a sand bank."

It was neither; but a quick, sharp turn to the right.

As far as speed is concerned he might have been shot from a catapult. Grinding his teeth together, he gave the handle bar a sharp jerk and hoped for the best, but the momentum was too much for him. He felt himself going through the air like an old shoe thrown at a cat.



The next thing he knew he was being sorted out of a rubbish heap by a grim old farmer.

My friend, do not permit any voluble youth to persuade you that you can ride over the rough pathway of life without a break. There are too many hills with steep grades and unknown bottoms.

Coasting is all right in its place, but when you have seen as much of life as I have, you will think it ought to be indulged in with

caution, and that a man ought always to have a brake, or, at least, never lose his pedal.

There is young Tompkins, for example. He has been doing altogether too much "coasting." He struck a long, easy grade, for his father was rich and paid all the bills on the first day of January.

But look at him now! The momentum of his fast life is too much for him. He is going down hill at a killing pace. There is a sharp turn that he can make by a great effort, if he will; but if he misses it—good-by Tompkins! For down at the bottom there is a deep pit full of broken bicycles and their riders.

Has the cigarette habit mastered you? One foot is off the pedal. Are you "rushing the growler" and "playing the races?" That settles it. Good-by!

Our natural appetites and passions are good wheels to ride when we control them, but they are bad runaways. The trouble is that we never know their force until we have "lost our pedal" and it is too late to catch it again.

Some of us gray-haired old fellows have seen some bad smash-ups in our day, and we want to save you from them, by telling you that self-control is the prime essential of mankind. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

This is what Gibbons says of Marcus Aurelius: "At the age of twelve years he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, and his passions to his reason."

Go thou and do likewise.

XVII.

IF you wish to experience a sort of tender melancholy, and at the same time have your thoughts tuned to a lofty strain, walk through the streets of our suburbs at the edge of one of these September evenings, when the clear sky, the full moon, and the crisp air betoken frost.

In almost every door yard you will see a gentle hand covering the flowers with a blanket, to save them from the withering breath of the coming winter.

Perhaps it is the hand of some fair young girl, whose love for the beautiful has just opened like the flowers themselves, in her pure, aspiring soul. Sometimes it is that of the white-haired grandmother, cherishing in a heart as fresh as a maiden's, a long-plighted devotion to these emanations of that upholding love which is the soul of this wide universe.

It touches the heart to see this fond solicitude for these delicate and ephemeral things! Who can look at the hoods which veil the gorgeous cannas, the brilliant geraniums, the modest asters, the begonias, petunias and chrysanthemums, without reflecting upon that charity

which, more and more, as the centuries roll on, casts a protecting mantle over all the varied forms of weakness and of need which are to be seen in this strange world?

As I stood looking at one of those dear old ladies, an evening or so ago, I recalled the cold winter nights that used to settle down upon the home of my boyhood, and I could see my mother standing by the fireplace, with a flannel blanket open to its heat, while I prepared myself for bed. Then came the swift rush up the stairs to the frosty chamber, the dread plunge between the cold sheets, and the warm blanket folded around me like a benediction, the good-night kiss, the soothing warmth, the joy of life, the bliss of sleep.

From how many sharp and swift descending frosts parental hands have shielded us!

With what patient and loving care fathers and mothers are hovering over the tender flowers that are blooming in the gardens of their homes, now that the nipping and eager air of life has already begun to blow upon them.

Over how many unprotected heads has the mantle of charity been thrown by the loving hands of this generation? When we think of the lives that have been blasted by the chilling frosts of sickness, poverty, and sin, it seems to us as if little had been done; but we must not

forget that we have succeeded in shielding multitudes of orphans, widows, blind, insane, and suffering ones.

Nor can we rightfully forget how many unprotected heads and hearts must be covered in the winter now approaching. Nature has turned a cold shoulder to them.

“Poor naked wretches, wheresoe’er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness defend you
From seasons such as these?”

Do you ever lie down at night, benumbed by the frosts of life, and wish that some hand, gentle as a mother’s, could wrap a warm blanket around you, and touch your troubled brow with a benediction?

Have you gathered, out of the manifold experiences of life, the faith that a great kind hand will reach out of the invisible, and cast the warm mantle of His love over you, when the last frost falls?

XVIII.

THEY say that Mr. and Mrs. Recently Married are drifting apart.

Were you ever in an open boat without oars, when the mighty hands of the ocean tide caught it and dragged it away from the shores where your loved ones stood helplessly stretching out their hands?

There are tides in the sea of matrimony. They move with tremendous power. Do not be caught in the drift!

Young "Recently" told me that he could feel himself being borne away from his wife by an undertow, which he could no more resist than an ocean current. The distance between them was widening, widening, widening. When they walk arm in arm, they seem to be in different counties. When they take their evening meal, the table appears to be as broad as a continent. When they sit down by the open fireplace, they are like planets on the opposite sides of the sun. He says there is something agonizing in the sensation of touching her hands and looking into her eyes, and feeling that their souls are as far apart as stars. "It seems like a horrible nightmare,"

he said, through his quivering lips. "I now know," he added, "the meaning of the old song, 'Thou Art so Near and Yet so Far!'"

It came about in this way.

When Recently came home one night he found his wife in a state of agitation bordering on frenzy. It happened once, twice, three times, and finally became chronic.

Housekeeping absorbed her mind and agitated her nerves. She could think of nothing else and talk of nothing else. And so Recently was compelled night after night and month after month to listen to tedious, irritating repetitions of petty worries with grocer boys and servant girls. The talk itself was exasperating; but when he clearly saw that his wife was so ignoble and small as to allow these trivial things to stifle all her larger sympathies and instincts, he began to crawl into himself to get away from her.

When he ventured to tell some of his own troubles, she said: "What would you do if you had a dish-nicking, eavesdropping, butter-stealing servant girl to deal with?"

If he tried to cheer her up with some gay pictures of the life at the store, she murmured "that she was in no mood to enjoy such nonsense, with all her household cares preying on her heart."

One day he said to her: "I am dead tired

of all this stuff about servant girls and grocery boys. I have enough troubles of my own, without having a freshet of these trivial worries rolled over me every night."

She burst into tears and said: "You are an unfeeling thing. A wife ought to have at least one friendly ear into which to pour her troubles."

"I am willing you should chose one of my ears into which to pour all the wretchedness of the day," he retorted, "if you would only whisper in the other, a few words of happiness and good cheer. Sing to me, laugh for me. Tell me only in a single phrase now and then that you love me and are happier here than you could be anywhere else. I am lonesome. There is a sense of utter isolation coming over me. Two years ago when I was out in Colorado and you were in London I could look up at the moon, and simply because you had seen it a few hours before, feel that you were by my side, although we were thousands of miles apart! And now I feel as if hydraulic pressure could not force us together."

When he repeated this conversation to me in a burst of confidence, I scolded him well for it, and made him promise to go home and apologize.

But I wish I dared tell Mrs. Recently Mar-

ried that men like to take servant girls and grocery boys in homoeopathic doses.

I think that husbands and wives ought to be as careful to talk to each other about bright and cheerful things, as to the people they meet at receptions. This vice is not all on one side of the house, however. There is Ruggles for example. His wife's nervous prostration was the direct result of his merciless rehash of the meanness of his customers and clerks.

If he had kept the old bright smile upon his lips she would still have had the bloom of the peach in her cheek.

XIX.

WE have all the natural possibilities for the most beautiful city in the world. But even if we should realize them, they could not be appreciated while the black pall of soft coal smoke hangs above our spires and hilltops.

May the day be hastened when every chimney which now spouts out its nastiness shall



have a smoke-consumer. I propose an escutcheon for Cincinnati. It is a tall stack, vomiting out clouds, in which are to be seen the words,

"Burn your own smoke."

It will have a double value, for it will be as good a motto for the citizen as for the city.

The average man is like a Cincinnati chimney. Above his head hang clouds of soot. He exists in darkness and sorrow himself, and forces his neighbors to live in the clouds which he exhales. "Burn your own smoke!"

Perhaps you have a physical infirmity. Is it rheumatism, neuralgia, or that grand climacteric, dyspepsia? It clouds your life and lies like a gloomy background behind all the joyous scenes of human existence. It colors all your plans and purposes and opinions. You can not be unconscious of it. You can not help thinking about it, and hitherto you have never ceased to talk about it. You puff it into the faces of all the people you meet, until at last they dodge across the street to avoid you, and when they do encounter you, they groan in spirit and gasp for breath. Get a smoke-consumer, neighbor.

Perhaps you have some great heart sorrow. In the vanished years, death stole into your household and robbed you of its dearest occupant; or misfortune crept stealthily upon you and swept away your property; or a bosom friend deceived and betrayed you. Since that time you have not been the same man. This violent wrench has wrecked your old world. It is the unvarying theme of your discourse. No matter into what other channel the conversation is turned, it soon digs back into the old bed.

We have stood it as long as we can, neighbor. We have troubles, too. "Burn your own smoke."

Perhaps you have doubts—suspicions as to the fundamental ideas of religion, fears as to the final outcome of existence; dark and skeptical notions as to the value of life itself.

But what call have you to pour that black cloud into the faces of your friends? It is more than likely that just such feelings exist in their minds, for such exhalations rise from the soul as inevitably as mists from a marsh, and it is merciless in you to add the weight and darkness of your own, to the burden which they are trying to roll away. And if they still trust unquestionably in the hopes which, in your misery, you call delusions, why should you steal them away with your questioning and doubts? If they are trying to keep the lace curtains over the windows of their soul white and clean, it is little less than infamous in you to turn the soot of your smoky chimney on them. "Burn your own smoke."

How the moral atmosphere of a home or a city would clear if all of us would keep our sufferings and sorrows and doubts to ourselves for a whole year! The most of them are so entirely imaginary or exaggerated that if we kept them a little longer in the fires of our own heart they would all burn up.

I know an old man of more than 80 years, and he has troubles enough to make a whole community sad ; but he burns his own smoke, or all, at least, that is consumable. And as for the rest ? It rises to heaven and is purified by that divine atmosphere !

There is always a residuum of pain, always an unconsumable element of sadness, always a little incombustible smoke in every human life. How it would settle down upon the race and stifle it, save for the breezes of hope that sweep down from the sky ! We are saved by hope !

Burn up what smoke you can, and commit the rest to the gales of heaven.

XX.

THE Major always rushes out of his home pell mell, and runs for the electric car, just as he used to do for the old Avondale 'bus, when it made but a single trip in the day.

He turned a corner, and all but tumbled over a colored man who stood looking at a half-finished building.

"Beg pardon," said the Major, half blown with his exertion. "Fine morning," he added, anxious to be civil.

"Would be if I was at work," replied the colored man.

Something in these few brief words arrested the attention and touched the heart of the kind old soldier, for he had been out of a job himself not many months before, and he knew how somber the world looks through jobless eyes.

What were the autumn trees and the beauty of the Indian summer to a man who had a wife and five little children waiting for him to come home with their daily bread, and he standing before a house where work had stopped—in his upperless shoes and ragged overalls, and

holding an empty dinner pail in his idle hand?

When the Major had drawn this story out of him by a few kindly questions, he placed a fifty cent piece in the man's hand.

The poor fellow looked at it a moment with gleaming eyes, and said: "Boss, I ain't seen one for five weeks."

"Why, bless my soul," exclaimed the Major. "Why, say, that's tough, downright tough. Look here, I'll feel easier if I divide up a little. I am better off than you are to-day, but there's no telling where I'll be to-morrow. Wheel is going round mighty fast. Men on top are not far from the bottom these times! A man in a pair of blue overalls with an empty dinner pail, out of a job—that gets me!"

By this time he had forgotten all about the electric car, and was hurrying the colored man homeward at a lively rate.

"There!" he exclaimed—a quarter of an hour later, as he saw his new-found friend looking as bright as a blazing chunk of Campbell's Creek coal, trudging off down the street with a suit of clothes under his arm, and a sack of flour and a piece of bacon on his shoulder—"I feel better."

He talked to himself sometimes, and I overheard him spluttering as he trotted off to the car: "Lord o' mercy! A wife and five chil-

dren! How would I feel if I was in his fix? I have been through the mill myself, but I was never ground up quite so fine as that! Times are hard; they're mighty hard, and there is n't work enough to go round, and I know it. Out of a job! After all, that is the saddest song I know. To have a hand and a heart for work—and nothing to do.

"I feel better, any way. Took some chances, I suppose. There is no more perilous point in the whole dangerous pilgrimage of any man's life than the one where he accepts his first alms!

"Hope to the good Governor above that I hav'n't helped make a beggar out of the poor fellow! Easy way to get a living—just ask for it!

"But you can't let men starve! Have to take some chances of doing them harm and encouraging them to pauperism, when you find them in a pinch like that."

"That's the worst thing about these hard times! Thousands of honorable, self-supporting men will be rolled under, lose heart and crawl out from beneath the crush—paupers, beggars! God help them! I hope Sambo has got more moral courage than maybe I would have.

"I did the best I knew. The time has come to divide up! Somehow, we are all in

the same boat. One touch of sorrow makes the whole world kin. I felt as though that fellow was my own brother! What was that he said?—‘Would be a nice morning if I had work!’

“Looks nice to me now, and hope it does to him.

“Hello, there! stop that car!”

XXI.

FIRST, I heard the tinkle of the scissors grinder's bell.

Then, as he bent to his task, the whirr of the emery wheel gnawing at the edge of the dull old butcher knife, came merrily in at my study window.

When his task was done, the maid brought up his modest bill.

Not having a nickel, I sent him a dime, and bade him keep the balance with the compliments of a well-wisher to an honest toiler, the reward of whose industry seemed inadequately small.

He sent me back a message—that swarthy, serious, low-browed Italian, which would read well upon the tombstone of a great man. It was: “I take no pay for work not done.”

“Great heavens!” said I to myself, rushing to the door to get a glimpse of a man—a man, mark you—poor, indeed, and ignorant, no doubt; but sound to the core, and ennobled by that first of all the qualifications of manhood, a feeling of invincible, uncompromising, uncorruptible independence.

We gave him another knife to grind, and

when his task was done he placed his money, earned by honest toil, in the pocket of his corduroy trousers, and started down the street, tinkling his bell steadily, the embodiment of self-respecting, charity-spurning, self-sustaining manhood.

Measure, if you can, the difference between him and the beggar, in whom that divine light of independence has been extinguished, and who stands at your door pleading for an alms with a whimper, and cursing you if it is withheld.

I know too well the terrible temptation to which the pauper has been exposed, the long sickness, the lost position, the months of poverty, the first alms, bestowed in love and received in helplessness, the final collapse and disintegration of that divine feeling of independence.

But, however it was undermined, by whatever misfortune or guilt it was lost, when it is once gone, it leaves a pitiful ruin behind it, for it is the keystone to the arch.

It was this uncompromising independence that lent such charm to the character of Robert Burns. He would be put under obligation to no man. He not only refused to be paid for work not done, but sometimes for work which had been done. "By heaven," said he to a publisher who offered him money for songs,

"they shall either be invaluable or of no value. I do not want your guineas for them."

Such a man was Garibaldi. After placing two kingdoms at the feet of Victor Emanuel, he asked for no reward and would take no aid, but he started for Caprera with a sack of potatoes and a capital of fourteen shillings, to begin life over again.

And this spirit still survives in the world. We sent an offer of help to some poor people in a neighboring church a few days ago. "God's people take no alms," was the reply of the pastor.

I shall never listen to the tinkle of a scissors grinder's bell again without hearing in its monotonous tones those simple, unpoetical, but noble words: "I take no pay for work not done."

Fight your own battles. Refuse all gifts which compromise your manhood or sap your independence. Thank God for all others.

"Lean on your own dinner," was the rude but comprehensible advice which one boy gave to another in my day, when some one rested an arm upon his shoulder to watch a wrestling match or a ball game.

My swarthy Italian leaned upon his own dinner—God bless him! And I doubt not that he will have a good dinner to lean upon so long as he can tinkle his bell or hold a knife to the wheel.

XXII.

“**W**HAT an infernal grind life is,” said Dobbin, throwing himself wearily into his chair, after a long day’s work, and a vain effort to relish his evening meal. “A man is nothing but a packhorse, a galley slave. Life is nothing but a treadmill. Necessity forces us into it in the morning, we tramp all day without making any progress, and creep



out at night with a tired body and an aching heart. It’s a weary, hopeless, tedious round of unsatisfying tasks. I wish to goodness I could get off the infernal machine and never get on again.” Mrs. Dobbin brought his slippers, lighted his pipe, pushed his hair back

with a caressing touch, sat down opposite, and smiled.

"Well," said the galley slave, a little gruffly, "what are you smiling at?"

"I was thinking of those six weeks you spent at the sea shore last summer, and how you chafed like a polar bear in a cage, and said you would give a hundred dollars for just one day in the office with a typewriter clicking, the telephone bell ringing, messenger boys coming with telegrams, and the drays rolling out of the alley, loaded with boxes."

"That's just it," answered the packhorse, with a sort of growl. "The whole scheme is a beastly blunder. When we are at work we hate labor, and when we are idle we loathe rest."

"Yes," said Mrs. Dobbin, in her soothing way, "when we are all tired out at night, life looks like a hopeless tangle, and when we get up rested in the morning we seize the end of the thread and courageously ravel out a little more. We ought to estimate life by the impression it makes upon us in the morning, Dobbin."

Dobbin's library was full of books, but there was not in any of them more sound sense than in those last few words.

For one, I believe that life is what it seems in our best and brightest hours.

The cynic says: "There are as many tired evenings as there are rested mornings, and there are more disappointments than realizations. Why do you say, then, that life is what it seems at its best? Why is it not what it seems at its worst?"

I can not tell; but I know that it is not, and so does the cynic. "Why should we measure life by its lowest phases, or faith by its lowest water mark? If I lose faith in man one hour out of twenty-four, in the twenty-three hours of faith I will do my work for humanity," said David Swing. "It is not the ebb and flow of common hours, but the great floodtide that leaves the highest mark upon the sand, to which our souls may again aspire."

The true measurement of Phil Sheridan's horse was not to be taken when cropping grass in the pasture, but when tearing down the road to Winchester. Humanity is not what it seemed to be in the dark ages, but in the days of Pericles and Augustus and Elizabeth.

Dobbin is not to be judged by what he is at night in his slippers and his grumbling gown, but by what he is when, like a noble fellow, he mounts his treadmill in the morning, full of hope and purpose.

Life is a treadmill. There is an irresistible pathos in the picture of earth's weary millions tramping their ceaseless, weary round. But

what a grist they are grinding in that mill!
What a grist Dobbin himself has ground! He
has three noble boys, as many lovely girls,
a happy home, a solid business, and has done
multitudinous deeds of kindness and of love
which only the pen of the good angel has re-
corded.

We grumble at life, but it is not less life
that any of us want. It is more!

“Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death!
'T is life—whereof our nerves are scant,
O life, not death, for which we pant.
More life and fuller that I want!”

XXIII.

YOUNG Blunderbuss sat watching a famous Doctor of Divinity, who was boiling the coffee for a party of picknickers.

He was silent a long time, while the sparks snapped, the water seethed, the smoke floated away into the heavens, and the great coffee maker fed the fire with dainty little sticks of dried pine, which he had carefully chopped in the wood-shed before coming to the grove.

"Humph!" said Young Blunderbuss, at last.

"What's the matter?" inquired the Doctor, lifting his keen blue eyes.

"I was thinking," he replied, "how the natural characteristics of men reveal themselves in the most trivial things. If I were making that coffee, I should have gathered up a cord or two of wood, some of it green, some punky and some rotten, thrown it all in a pile, used up a box of matches lighting it, blinded my eyes with smoke in blowing up a flame, burned off the handle and the cover of the coffee pot, and at last surrounded the coffee with such a conflagra-

tion that I could not have reached it when it was done."

"And here you are, with a dainty stone oven, a little bundle of kindlings hardly larger than wooden toothpicks, a coffee pot clean enough for a breakfast table and an aroma strong and divine enough to overpower the smell of burning wood. Such is the difference in men."

"Why," said the Doctor, smoothing his breast with a downward stroke of both hands, as he did when well pleased with himself, "that is nothing—to make coffee with such great sticks of wood as these. One day, by the side of a trout stream in the Rocky Mountains, I told six men with whom I was fishing, and who were mourning because there was no wood to cook a dinner with, that I could boil the coffee with a fire made from a copy of the New York Tribune (and it was not a Sunday edition, either.)

"Two of them made a bet (to which I was not a party, mind you) that I could not do it. But I did it, just the same."

And then he stroked his double-breasted coat with his two hands once more, smiled, opened the lid of the pot, and drew into his expansive nostrils a long, delicious whiff of the celestial aroma.

"Gee!" said young Blunderbuss.

I was a third member of the little group,

and had my own reflections about men and things.

Young Blunderbuss was right. There is a mighty difference in men, and it is nowhere more marked than in their methods of extracting from the elements of life its divine essence of satisfaction and joy.

I know many people who do just what he said he would—gather mountainous heaps of money, of land, of houses, of pictures, of food, of clothing, and, as it were, set them all on fire to stew out that divine liquor we call human happiness. But they only waste their firewood, spoil the pot and blind themselves with the smoke. And I have also met a few people like the Doctor. You shall see them in some retired nook, a little cottage, perhaps, or a room in an apartment house, or a cabin by a lake (like Thoreau's), who will take an old book, a dog and gun, a banjo (a few little slivers of firewood) and with them distill a sort of ambrosial drink, rich beyond words, and potent with the bliss of being. In this life it is not so necessary that we should have much firewood, as that we know how to burn a little.

XXIV.

THERE has been a very small, little tragedy enacted during the past week in every home out of which a sensitive child has gone for the first time to the public school.

When little Bill started off, his big father who was leading him by the hand swallowed a large-sized lump in his throat, and his mother stood in the window wiping her eyes until her "baby" was out of sight, and then, throwing herself upon the bed, sobbed as if he were gone forever. As for poor little Bill—when he entered that schoolyard and heard three hundred children screeching like crows in a cornfield, and then passed into the presence of the august and awful school-teacher, he endured a nervous excitement and suffered a strain as great as William Jennings Bryan did on the night of the election.

When he came home last Monday night this particular little Bill, a dear little friend of mine, was pale as a corpse, could not swallow a mouthful of food, tossed all night in restless sleep, and waked his papa and mamma at 4:30 in the morning, "so as to be sure and not let him be late!"

"I am afraid he is not well enough to go," said Bill, the senior, who never could endure to see any living thing suffer, especially a child.

"Yes, I am, papa," responded the little hero. "I know I must go, for I must learn how to read, so as to be a big man. But my head is hot, and I guess you better bandage it, and give me a cold bath!"

There is courage, let me tell you! Many a soldier has achieved immortal fame with less! "Poor little kid!" said his father, "his troubles have begun and they will never end." And a tender look came into his eyes, which showed how deeply he wished that he could shield him, and gather all the keen arrows of suffering into his own heart.

Be gentle with those delicate little beings to whom a school-teacher is as august a being as Jehovah was to Moses!

I can remember when I entered the old "Auburn Academy" as well as if it was yesterday—and it was a good many yesterdays ago, you may be sure! I have never since passed through a more terrible ordeal. My head was hot, and I needed a bandage and a cold bath, like little Bill.

When his father told me what the little fellow said, I did not know whether to laugh or to cry. It was pathetic beyond words, for the

suffering was genuine, and poignant as yours and mine.

But it was funny, too, for there are a good many big boys around the country about this time who can not eat their suppers at night, who toss upon their pillows, and wake from a feverish sleep at half-past four with their heads so hot that they need a compress and a cold bath.

Little Bill's father confessed that it was so with him, and I know scores of brave men who are in the same boat!

These are times which try men's souls.

What business men need to-day is the courage of little Bill.

Perhaps some of you will have to go home and tell your wives and children that you must sell your beautiful home, and move into a little cottage, or face your creditors and tell them that you have gotten to the end of your rope.

That will be hard, God knows! but it was hard for little Bill to go to school.

"I must be a man," said he, "and so you had better bandage my head, give me a cold bath, and let me go."

Hurrah for little Bill!

XXV.

FROM my study window I can see a little child in a white pinafore, wandering over the lawn like a tiny cloud in a summer sky or a pure dream in the soul of a slumbering saint.

Now and then she stoops to pick a dandelion, and she passes them through her fingers with



the tenderness with which the converted Zacheus might have counted out his golden eagles for sweet charity.

I know a man who is driven into paroxysms of resentment by the sight of a dandelion, as some women are into those of revulsion by the sight of a cat, or hay-fever patients into fits of sneezing by the odor of new mown hay. It is

because they spoil his lawn, the love of which is creditable to him. But any man who was brought up in America and has no love of a dandelion in his soul is like the man who hath no music in it, and is

“Fit for treason, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted.”

Speaking for myself, dandelions are the golden ducats that pay my fare back over the railroad of memory into the ever-receding land of childhood. They are the “Christofers” in the realm of sight, as spearmint and violets are in that of odors, and bear me over the river of time that flows between me and those dear and distant days.

In those first spring mornings when they issue from the lawns by day, as the stars from heaven at night, in memory I go wandering, again barefooted through the old “Meridian” meadows. I feel the cool, fresh grass creeping about my legs, follow the ground-bird to its new-made nest under a mullein leaf, count its speckled eggs in wondering delight, dam the rivulet that murmurs through the field and hang my little wheel beneath the waterfall.

Once more I suck the spring water through the dandelion stems or weave them into chains, split them with my tongue, rolling them into

spirals in my mouth and shaking them out into curls like those which hung over the coral ears of Miss Jerusha, the dear old spinster whom we all called "Aunt," and, if I must tell it after all these years, putting them under the chin, that beautifully rounded chin of little Susie Ingham, ostensibly to see by the reflection of golden light upon the transparent skin "whether she loved butter," but really by getting a better look into her big blue eyes to see whether she loved me better than she did "Chub Coppernall."

Ah, we never forget the eyes and cheeks and lips and chins that first aroused the divine madness in our hearts, as we never forget the mountains and the rivers which first awakened our admiration of the beautiful.

Nor were the charms of the dandelion's gray old age less powerful than those of his lusty youth. To pick the silver globe with anxious care, puff out the boyish cheeks and blow the tiny seeds upon a thousand different journeys on the summer air, to watch them until the last had vanished in the grass, and dream and dream and dream. Ah, that was life!

I know a gentleman whose little girl crept into his lap with her arms full of dandelions (dent de lion—the lion's tooth), and said to

him: "If I was a little dandelion in a meadow, would you pick me first of all?"

The arch little elf! I suspect that by this time there are youngsters roving through the meadows who will snatch the precious blossom from the old man's hands.

But none of them could ever feel toward her quite as he did when he folded her to his heart and said: "I would pick you first of a million flowers in a thousand-acre lot!"

XXVI.

THE arrival of distinguished visitors in our city is chronicled by the daily press.

One has come whose presence means more than a visit from the Czar of all the Russias. But no reporter met him. His name is not upon any hotel register. He came unheralded and alone. Slipping quietly across the river and over the roofs of the great city, he rubbed his eyes and coughed quietly to remove the smoke and soot, and then announced his presence by a heavenly song from a treetop in Avondale. Windows were opened, and the faces of his friends were wreathed in smiles. Old age paused upon its cane to listen. Youth looked up from its sports and heard the song of the robin with unutterable rapture.

He has come, the joyous messenger, the red-breasted nuncio of the approaching spring, first spray drop of the advancing tide of bird life that is rolling northward like a flood, and which will soon break in billows of melody against our forest trees. What countless multitudes of birds there are! God has made enough so that every child from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the gulf to the Canadian

border, may some time, in the round year, hear that happiest of songs. I can not think of any deprivation more unutterably sad than that of having to live in some spot where the robins do not sing.

That sweet, clear note was one of those celestial influences that awakened me to self-consciousness. I can see myself now, standing in open-eyed wonder beneath a maple tree in the little village street, and listening in awe to that mysterious song that seemed to float out of the infinite.

To me, the robin's song has been a more sacred timepiece than holidays or rising constellations. All life is rhythmic in its movements, and consists of looking backward and forward to the tune of the robin's song. It is not only that the music is ineffably sweet, but that the bird itself is the token of the returning life of the world. I hear the summer breezes in its song, and see the summer flowers upon its bosom.

I doubt if in all the world there is a living thing that imparts more joy to life than a robin, with the sole exception of nature's greatest wonder and blessing, a little child.

How many hours of every life have been passed in listening to his never tedious song, in watching his antics on the lawn, or the glow of his bosom in the tree tops! Could there

be any thing sweeter than to have the last act of consciousness—like that first—linked with a robin's song; to hear him trilling his hopeful lay as "the casement slowly grows a glimmering square," and the faces of loved ones grow dim and disappear?

But he does more than sing. He builds! It is a tiny edifice that he erects, but still he is a builder. It is something to have constructed in this world of crumbling forms one little nest. And in that nest he and his mate will accomplish that perpetual miracle of nature—the reproduction of themselves. With wondering eyes we shall watch the tiny eggs, the brooding mother, the food-bringing father, the new born babes, the fluttering wings, and then at last—the vacant nest. It is our life in miniature.

"God shield ye, heralds of the spring,
Ye faithful swallows, fleet of wing;
Houps, cuckoos, nightingales,
Turtles, and every wilder bird,
That makes your hundred chirpings heard
Through the green woods and dales."

XXVII.

THE "scorchers" who ride from Utica to Clinton end their journey at the village park.

Young Topsyturvey came tearing up the road on his wheel, and, just as he reached the curb-stone, gave a wild glance over his shoulder. His jaw fell, a look of unutterable astonishment overspread his countenance, and he tumbled from his seat a helpless lump.

"What's the matter?" cried the bystander, as he came to himself, after they had dashed some water from the fountain into his purple face.

"Was n't there any one behind me?" he asked, with a bewildered look.

"Not a soul," they answered, gazing down the cinder path.

"Well," said the crestfallen Topsyturvey, "I'll tell you how it was. Just as I left New Hartford there was a fellow in a red 'sweater' rode up behind me and sang out, 'Get out of my road, young fellow!'"

"Now, I never take anybody's cinders if I can help it, and I began to scorch. I heard his knee cords snap, and his wheel chewing

the path. I opened the throttle and gave her head. I have ridden hard before, but never like that. His front wheel touched my rear one, and once he nearly turned me over. A hard burst put me out of his reach; but I could hear his tire biting the dust; and every now and then its sharp pop as a gravel stone snapped out from under it.

"He followed me like my shadow. I could not get away from him any more than a man can from the back of his head. The sound of that tire grew louder and louder, or at least it seemed to me as if it did. Its steady grinding made a noise like thunder in my ears. It followed me like destiny, hissing in a maddening way, 'I'll beat you yet; I'll beat you yet.'

"But, gentlemen, to make a long story short, it seems that for some time past, how long I can not tell, it has been the rear wheel of my own Rambler to which I have been listening, and I have been trying to beat myself. And now, if any of you are thirsty, we will adjourn to Boot's drug store and test his ginger ale."

The corks popped. The liquid gurgled in the necks of the bottles. The delighted bystanders raised the glasses to their lips, tipped their heads backward, and gurgled in reply.

As they drank, Topsyturvey propounded

the following sentiment, and advanced these brief remarks :

“Gentlemen—‘The steady wheeler.’

“This is an age of feverish unrest. A universal epidemic of raging pulses is afflicting humanity. Its heart is no longer an organ. It is a trip hammer. There is a motive, which, like the rod of Aaron, bids fair to swallow up all others—a motive coarse and vulgar past all words. It is—to beat! To beat for what—nobody knows! To merely be ahead, to outdo the rest, to make more money, live in better style, do a bigger business, draw a bigger crowd, outstrip the fastest rider—for no other reason in the world, but just to do it—this is the insanity which is driving the human race along the pathway of life, like a wild-cat engine, from whose cab the engineer has fallen in a swoon. We are likely to become a race of ‘scorchers,’ with a bicycle face for a countenance and a hump for a back. I have been the leader of the fools. And now, at last, my craze to beat the other man has culminated in this mad effort to ride away from my own hind wheel! I am done! I propose to reduce my bicycle gear from 72 to 66, and if the wheels in my head need to be altered they must take their turn.”

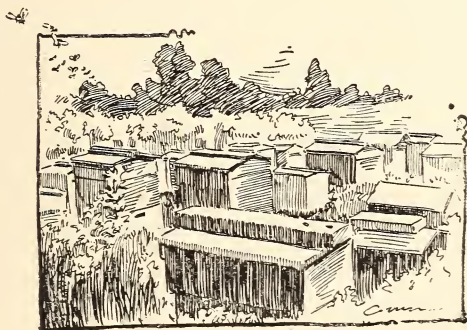
He has gained ten pounds of flesh since this singular adventure. He lives a calmer

and nobler life. Old habits are hard to break, however, and he sometimes forgets himself. But when he does, his bright-faced wife says to him in her gentle way, "There is no one pushing you, Topsy. You hear your own rear wheel."

XXVIII.

“DON'T ape the silly busy bee—
His rashness can't be beat;
He stores up honey, as you see,
Which other people eat.”

These words by a poet of the Milwaukee Sentinel are only “nice” because they are “naughty.”



The man who did this stanza write
Is verily a heathen.
His sting is hidden in his song;
Beware of the poet bee, then.

I can take a joke, and reckon this to be one.
The province of humor is as broad as the
world, and perhaps the universe. Victor

Hugo, in describing Gwynplaine kissing the beautiful arm of Dea, says: "These are the things at which the good God in his quality of old philosopher smiles!" There is a smile as well as a tear upon the face of Nature. More laughs than groans upon her lips, I think.

But the sentiment in this quatrain is the creed of so many cynics whom we meet that one can not read it without a sigh, and feels a little shudder, as when he hears a joke upon the grave.

Every man who has pondered the problem of human life knows in the depths of his heart that it is not the honey which he eats, but that which he hives for others, out of which he gets true happiness.

Ask that sweet young mother, from what she derives the most pleasure—the mere gustation of her morning meal, or the secretion of the milk which her cooing, radiant, laughing babe will draw from her bosom?

Ask the father whether he feels more satisfaction in the bicycle which he rides himself or the one on which his little Bill goes scorching down the street? Ask the noble Garfield whether he found his deepest joy in the feelings of his own heart when he took his presidential oath, or in those of his aged mother, whom he turned to kiss?

The pleasure of honey in the mouth to

honey in the hive is as one to a thousand! In some ways times have changed, but it is still more blessed to give than to receive!

This is not mere sentiment, extravagance, gush. We derive more pleasure from anticipation than realization. This is a law of our being. It is also a law that we find a deeper happiness in the emotions of gladness which rouse in other bosoms than our own. You may think this a strange principle to be in nature, but at least you can not alter it.

Did you ever stop to think how we are living on the honey stored up in this great hive by the myriad human bees who have hummed through these meadows before us? By what ceaseless toil did they distill the sweetness on which we live, and how patiently secrete the sacred treasures which make our modern life a blessing! Think of the honey of our literature! and hear the buzzing of the wings of the Homers, Virgils, Dantes, in the fields of Hymettus; of our art, and recall the toil of Phidias, Praxiteles, of Raphael and Angelo; of our science, and hear the painful droning in the long and weary nights of Ptolemy, of Aristotle, of Galileo, Newton, Darwin; of our civil government, and picture to yourself the weary wandering of Moses, Solon, Charlemagne, Cromwell, Washington, Lincoln, through the pathless fields of the speculation.

of our religion, and imagine, if you can, the gropings of Confucius, Buddha, Abraham, Plato, and Jesus alone in the wilderness, the garden, the judgment hall, the sepulcher, dying, in order that they might wrest from the mysteries of nature some great truths for other generations yet to come!

And what are you doing in the meadows? Have you ever added a tiny drop of sweetness, distilled from your own life, to the sacred stores upon which your children and your children's children may derive some joy?

XXIX.

“IT’S a boy! Mother and baby doing well!
Shake! Yours, TOM.”

Every day this message flashes over the wires. The operators smile when they send it, and the electric fluid always travels a little faster when it bears it, and the hearts that receive it beat more freely.

This morning The Tribune will find its way into more than one home where a young mother’s eyes are suffused with tears that issue from the depths of a divine gladness, and where a father tiptoes to a cradle side half choked with pride and joy.

Of all the events which the newspapers will chronicle to-day, nothing will compare in interest and importance with that which this telegram announces.

The little pilgrim who has landed on this bank and shoal of time after his voyage from the dim unknown may have brought with him some message for which humanity has been waiting 50,000 years.

Socrates, Buddha, and Zoroaster came in the same quiet way. Jesus Christ was once a little babe in swaddling bands. For all you know,

that tiny form in the cradle, if it chance to be a girl, may be the real "new woman" come among us to incarnate that new ideal which seems struggling for manifestation.

It will be a good thing for you, Tom, when you creep upstairs to take your last look before starting down town, when you turn down the soft coverlid and feel a strange choking sensation in your throat, to put up a little prayer and make an earnest promise.

Perhaps you have been a trifle wild and reckless. It won't do now, Tom. There is a pair of little feet hidden away in those warm blankets that in two or three years will begin to toddle in your footsteps, and you had better begin to walk in a straight path, Tom.

If you should ever live to see that baby a grown man in whom all your little peccadilloes had been magnified into full-grown and brutal vices, you would look back to this day as the bitterest of your life. Turn over a new leaf, Tom. Be such a man that to the last day of his existence the proudest thing this little boy can do, will be to point to you (or your memory) and say, "He was my father."

And as for the mother, she is too weak to listen to a long homily on this most eventful morning that ever dawned upon the world. But every one is sending congratulations, and I must send mine. You never knew before,

did you, what unutterable emotion of gladness could swell in a human heart?

I can give you no better wish than that every plan you are making now for the welfare of this little pilgrim in his long journey may be fulfilled. For these new moments of responsibility are moments of self-renunciation. Here are needs before which your desires vanish. Be all that you are vowing in the shrine of your glad young heart that you will be. Remember "The child is father to the man." Don't forget that if you "train up a child in the way that he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it."

"A sunshine broken in the rill,
Though turned astray, is sunshine still."

But it is not so with a little child! When it is turned astray it is no longer a sunbeam, but a dark and wavering shadow.

And as for the little child itself, as soon as it can comprehend, teach it this verse from a Persian song:

"On parent knees, a naked, new-born child
Weeping thou sat'st, while all around thee smiled;
So live, that sinking in thy last long sleep,
Calm thou may'st smile, while all around thee
weep."

XXX.

THIS afternoon, when you are sitting in the grateful shade of the grand stand of the ball field, follow with your thoughts the foul tip that goes scooting over the tin roof into the open street.

A hundred ragged gamins haunt that street, shifting here and there like little tadpoles in a pond. They are of all shapes, descriptions and colors, some being short and fat, and others lean and tall, some black, some white, and some both black and white ; some limping on crutches, and others bounding like young deers, all being ragged and dirty—Falstaff's army in miniature.

"You would think that I had a hundred and fifty prodigals lately come from swine-keeping, and eating chaff and husks. . . . There's but a shirt and a half in all my company, and the half shirt is two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's coat without sleeves."

But beneath those shirts beat eager hearts, capable of all life's hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, aspirations and despairs.

That hundred pairs of eyes—some like lit-

tle ferrets, others like young eagles or even-
ing stars, and some like little peeled onions or
holes punctured in yellow parchment—are riv-
eted upon some favorite spot on the tin roof,
or roam along its edge as if it were the horizon
of a universe.

They are watching for that foul tip which
you indifferently saw scoot over the building.
To you it was a leather ball—to them a key to
paradise, for it is the talisman which, upon its
presentation to the fierce-eyed Peter at the
gate, unlocks for them that world of glory
whose *shouts of excitement and roars of
laughter have floated out upon their eager ears
like Elysian music far away and sweet.

It comes! What a wild plunge! What a
mad scramble! Like a pack of wolves they
howl and fight, until at last, more cunning
than the rest, or stronger, or luckier, perhaps,
the favored child of fortune having seized the
ball approaches the sacred gate and vanishes
into the mysterious inclosure, leaving his com-
panions to envy his happiness and to begin
again their weary watching and their patient
waiting.

It is indeed a world in miniature!

So stand the masses of mankind, listening
to the plaudits of the favored few who have
entered the gates, and taken their seats on

the grand stand, to watch the great game that is being played in the inclosure.

Now and then the ball of fortune—some lucky chance, some golden opportunity, flies into the air, and the wild struggle for the place, the title, the fame, the fortune begins, and the victor vanishes into that charmed circle which huzzas within.

In the fence there is not even a peep hole. Every opening is barred.

The pathos of the spectacle lies in the fact that there are so many more people than there are “foul tips,” and the prizes seem to go much more by accident than by award or distribution.

It must be a hard thing for the little gamin, weak of knee and slow of pulse, who goes to the ballground every day for years, and always hopes and always struggles and always fails!

He will lose heart sometime and go no more and hope no more and struggle no more.

The next time we go to the park let us carry an extra “seventy-five cents” and pick out some little fellow who has a “game leg” or the “rickets” and take him in with us to the grand stand. Let us give him one long look at the great spectacle. Let us give him a cushion, a score card and a glass of lemonade—give the poor little chap one chance in

his life to see the great and only "Buck Ewing!"

He will remember it when he is old and gray, and we shall get more pleasure out of his deep joy than from the game itself.

XXXI.

FROM the Mississippi to the Pacific, from British America to Mexico, the word "cinch" is in every mouth.

To get a "cinch" on somebody, or some opportunity, is the universal ambition.

"I have got a cinch, a dead, mortal cinch!" Such is the cry of triumph that some time or

other goes up from the lips of every fortune hunter in the wild and woolly West.



I had an Indian pony by the name of Tiny. Before I had comprehended his subtlety I tightened the cinch and climbed into the saddle. After he had gone a few rods, he turned a corner sharply, and the saddle and I rolled off. He had inflated his abdomen with air by a gentle inhalation just as I fastened the girth.

At length I encountered his guile with craft. Upon the instant when I tied the knot I drove

my knee violently into the distended stomach. The collapse reduced him to his normal dimensions and made the "dead, mortal cinch" possible. He exchanged the smile with which he greeted my misfortune for a sigh, with which he acknowledged his own.

Of the millions of people who are looking for "cinches" in this life, who finds them?

Nature has a way of inflating herself just as we tie the knot, and exhausting, just as we climb into the saddle. No one has ever yet found such a trick for her, as I played upon my pony.

"I have got a cinch on the sea," says the sailor, and suddenly his boat goes down. "I have got a cinch on fruit raising," says the farmer, and the frost nips his blossoms. "I have got a cinch on the market," says the speculator, and a panic strikes him.

"I have got a cinch on the world," said Cæsar, and on the instant the knife of Brutus touched his heart.

If any one ever had a cinch, it is William McKinley; but who knows whether the political horse may not be inflated, and ready to exhaust at St. Louis?

No, it is in harmony with eternal nature that it should be impossible for man to get a cinch on nature. He must never be so firmly seated in the saddle that he can not be thrown.

You complain of the uncertainties and vicissitudes of life. You fret because you can not master the forces which you have to employ. But if you could, you would abuse your power. You would secure privileges which you would never surrender, and prerogatives which you would never renounce.

If nature suddenly throws you out of the saddle in which you had been riding on some weak person's neck, you must remember that it is by the same method that she prevents some stronger man from riding yours.

I can excuse her for the grim smile upon her face when she turns her sharp corners and tumbles out of their comfortable saddles the Kings and the Barons and the Philosophers who have been comfortably seated upon the shoulders of the sweating masses.

It begins to seem to the Plutocrats, no doubt, as if they had tied the girth more tightly than the Aristocrats, but some fine day they will find themselves in the dust of the great highway of civilization, wondering what was the matter with their cinch.

No, there are no absolute certainties in life. There are no "dead, mortal cinches." No matter what horse we are riding, our saddles are liable to come off.

And this very element of insecurity is one of the charms of life. How many active

riders would now be sleeping in their saddles, if it were not for that slippery cinch!

But there is one thing that a brave man can always do. He can tighten his cinch and mount again!

Have you lost your seat in the panic? Don't be discouraged. You have plenty of company. Catch your horse, fling your saddle over his back, tighten your cinch, and mount again.

XXXII.

LITTLE Simpkins rushed upstairs two steps at a time, bounded into his employer's office, and exclaimed, in the wildest excitement: "Those fellows down there are 'doing me dirt.' I can't stand it. What'll I do?"

The rosy-faced old man stroked Simpkins's bristling little back, and said to him: "Keep sweet, Simpkins; keep sweet!"

Keep sweet to-day, my friend, and pass this message along.

There is much in life to embitter us. We are misunderstood and deceived by our friends, abused and betrayed by our enemies. Not a day goes by, without its friction and irritation. The world is full of meanness and littleness.

No matter; keep sweet.

Do sour things taste any sweeter for being eaten by a sour mouth? If you had to take a dose of wormwood, would you smear your tongue with aloes? There is no man in the world so vulnerable to every dart as the man whose heart is full of bitterness.

When I used to "catch behind the bat," in the early days of baseball, we had no protectors, whatever, and took curved balls, short

bounds, and foul tips on our shins and in our stomachs, or with our noses, eyes, or mouths.

In these better days the catchers wear gloves, masks, and pads.

The man who "keeps sweet" wears mittens, masks, and pads. The foul tips and inshoots of misfortune can not hurt him. A sweet temper and a sunny face will turn the edge of the sharpest word.

You are going down to the store to-day, to come into the closest possible contact with a fellow (I know him well) whose very appearance would curdle fresh milk, roil the water of a jasper sea, and set the teeth of a nursing baby on edge. You say that the only way in which you can stand him at all is "to get good and mad" at the very outset, and stay so all day, just as you endure a dentist, by screwing your face all up, gripping his elbow with your hands and kicking at the footrest.

Well, that is one way. But there is another. Keep sweet. If you have a burden to carry, you do not fit yourself to carry it by cutting all the sinews in your back. But this is what you do when you try to bear your burden by getting angry. Every thing goes wrong with an angry man. The gods are sharp! They wish to destroy you, and so they make you mad. Beware of the gods!

Probably you got out of bed on the wrong

side this morning, and Bridget forgot to set the buckwheat cakes last night, and the baby pulled your poached egg over into your lap at breakfast and spoiled your new tailor-made trousers, and you are boiling inside like a tea kettle. Nice breakfast you are having, are n't you? Pretty frame of mind this is for beginning the day, going away angry and leaving Mary sobbing at the front door and begging in vain for a kiss.

Well, well, John! Who would have believed that sweet temper of yours could be ruined as soon as this! I remember well the day that you were married, when every body said that "Mary had caught a stray sunbeam!" And now all the old girls are shrugging their shoulders, and whispering: "Close call we had!"

"Come, now, don't fret at Mary because she did not sweeten your coffee. The sugar is right there by you. And, by the way, drop a lump or two into that embittered heart of yours!

Keep sweet to-day.

XXXIII.

“OTHERS shall sing the song;
Others shall right the wrong,
Finish what I begin
And what I fail of win!
What matter—I or they?
Mine or another day?
So the right word be said
And life the better made.”

To multitudes of people these words will seem the merest twaddle. They never strove to sing a song that should fall like Longfellow's arrow into the heart of a friend! They never struggled to right a wrong, like Whittier's "Reformer: "

“All grim and soiled and brown with tan
I saw a Strong One, in his wrath
Smiting the godless shrines of man
Along his path.”

To other multitudes who have really striven to bind up broken hearts and set captives at liberty, only to meet with repulse and failure, they will seem like a fragment of an angelic hymn of consolation, wafted out of the vast void around them.

These were the favorite lines of a gifted and noble woman, who, while I write, lies in a quiet

chamber through whose open window the breezes are wafting the odors of the lilac buds and the songs of the robins.

Her hands, empty for the first time since childhood, are folded across her breast.

That heart which ceased to beat for herself long years ago, has ceased to beat at all. The smile, which it cost her in her life so many heroic struggles to wear, sleeps upon her silent lips like a dream of beauty.

She sang many songs whose echoes died away without response. She strove often, and bravely, only to know many repulses and defeats.

But there burned in her soul the unquenchable faith that all she did and all she suffered, was to work out for herself a far more unceasing and eternal weight of glory, and to be a brief but indispensable note in the harmony of the song of a redeemed humanity.

While the avaricious and the base are spoiling mankind like the Philistines of old—in every hamlet and in every square, these patient, loving, gentle souls are sacrificing themselves for others.

“She never thinks of herself,” said a father to me the other day while speaking of his daughter. “She has reversed the order of nature, and ‘mothers’ her own mother in her sickness as if she were a baby.”

They do not ask for rewards. They do not look for results. They sing their songs and strike their blows and pass on, as a sower flings his seed into the soil, and goes home to his evening supper and repose.

How pitiful it makes our repining at the fruitlessness of life's endeavor seem!

For this one day let us trample upon that deadly thought that the universe is a vast machine constructed to grind out happiness for our little mouths to suck—(like a midget which thinks all the cattle in a pasture exist to distill one infinitesimal drop of milk for his little proboscis)!

There is an egotism and self-love in this age of luxury that becomes positively infernal.

For this one day (it is only a few hours long) let us put the gnawing thought of our own personal happiness and success, out of sight.

Let us do our work as a little child plays his game, and when it is finished, rest.

The best we do is metamorphosed—suffers “a sea change into something new and strange.”

It is our worst that springs up into full view to curse us.

“Twice I did well and heard of it never;
Once I did evil and heard of it ever.”

XXXIV.

DURING one of the hottest battles of the civil war, three soldiers found themselves exposed to a terrible fusillade.

They flung themselves behind an old log, and listened to the hornet-like hum of the bullets as they sped through the air, or to their thuds as they buried themselves in the trees.

The first of these men was a philosopher,



who observed, the second a wag who joked, and the third a coward who trembled.

As the coward's fear increased to terror, the wag cut a switch from an overhanging branch,

fastened a pin in the end of it, and when the next crash of the muskets was heard, drove it sharply into the back of the shivering poltroon. He gave a wild yell, sprang into the air, and fell back dead!

The wag stopped laughing, and the philosopher reflected.

"Most of our troubles are purely imaginary," said he. And he was right.

When we bestow a passing thought upon the misery which the mere anticipation of danger and sorrow causes in this world, we are tempted to despise or condemn the author of a system in which the imagination so horribly increases the fund of our real and necessary suffering.

But that passing thought is superficial and unphilosophical. For if it were not for that swift and sustained dread of yet unrealized peril (which is, indeed, a source of pain), the deadly perils themselves would fall upon us unforeseen, like lightning from a clear sky.

Measure then, honestly and fairly, the protective power of that pain-producing and ever-present dread of the unreal!

The beautiful doe who leads her spotted fawn through the wilderness to the "salt lick," starts, trembles and endures immeasurable suffering at a hundred imaginary dangers for every one that is real. But if she did not thus suffer, and if she plodded on stupidly

until after the wild-cat's leap, her pain would be irremediable.

It is this perpetual anticipation, this apparently superfluous agony of the imagination which alone makes the survival of life possible.

It is because the mother trembles for her babe, the maiden for her virtue, the man for his honor, the merchant for his goods, the farmer for his crops, the invalid for his health, the patriot for liberty and the Christian for his faith—even at the presence of imaginary danger—that civilization survives.

"Experience," said Coleridge, "is like the stern light of a vessel. It lights up only the path which we have already traveled."

It is this instinctive and imaginary fear of the unreal, that lights up the pathway over which we have yet to go.

But we have not yet fathomed this deep theme.

Great, necessary, beneficial as that gift of the Creator is—its possession and abuse become the source of wretchedness for which we all deserve to be despised.

We distort, instead of cultivating, this divine instinct, and it becomes abnormally sensitive. When it becomes morbid, hope and peace depart.

Where is the man whose troubles are not a thousand times more imaginary than real?

To the vast masses of worrying creatures who compose this human race, the prick of a pin is as deadly as the crash of a bullet, and all because of a morbid imagination.

There is poor little Mrs. Pinchface making herself miserable from morning until night over the snubs and slights which she fancies people are putting upon her, and here comes Mr. Shudder Daily, who has not enjoyed a peaceful sleep for three thousand six hundred and fifty nights for fear he will end his days in the poor-house.

The evils which come to us are to those we anticipate, as one to a hundred.

If we only suffered the real pains, life would not be so hard.

It is the deadly pin prick that kills.

Wait until your bullet really hits you before you spring into the air with a yell.

Come, now, you are not so badly off, are you? If there were no to-morrow you could be happy to-day. Perhaps there will not be! At all events, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

XXXV.

DOMINICK O'GRADY, the murderer, lay upon his cot in the court-room, helplessly and hopelessly demented.

Judge, jury, counselors and spectators looked upon him with pity and with horror.

"First," said the physician in the witness box, "he tried to commit physical suicide.

"Failing in this, he attempted mental and moral suicide! He refused to eat, he refused to talk, he refused to perform any of those functions in the discharge of which our true humanity consists. There is a definite line between sanity and insanity. He deliberately and voluntarily forced himself over that line!"

At these words, a hush stole over the assembly. "He forced himself over the line." "He forced himself over the line." The words kept ringing in our ears.

Such is the responsibility of man!

A fixed and definite line is drawn around us, inside of which we may safely move. When we pass it we enter the domain of the abnormal and the fatal. That line is not always visible, and is all the more dreadful because it runs through shadows.

But although it is hidden, it is always there.

There is a line between health and disease, and many of us are voluntarily pushing ourselves over it. Once upon the other side, forces will seize us, over which we have no control.

There is a line between virtue and vice.

Over that line we are dragged by resistless powers. We force ourselves across it! It is when we are upon the other side that the resistless powers seize us. It is like passing that line in the Niagara river above the falls, on one side of which your destiny is in your own hands, but on the other it is in the power of the cruel, the remorseless, the irresistible river!

There comes a dreadful moment in the experience of every one who forces himself over the line, when he feels the clasp of the mighty hands, the pull of the downward stream of influences, against which he struggles in vain.

It is this involuntary element in the tragedy that lends it sublimity.

We regarded that hump beneath the blankets of his cot, from which the very semblance of humanity had almost vanished, with loathing and disgust, until the trained expert shot that ray of light upon the moral problem: "He forced himself over the line."

Among the thousands who read the columns of *The Tribune* this morning, there will be some who are treading dangerously near the line.

It is not too late to turn back now, but one more step, and, like Dominick O'Grady, you will be upon the other side.

What could help him? Law, science, religion, society, all the enginery of modern life for uplifting humanity were powerless after he had forced himself across the line.

"All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand," said Lady Macbeth, after she had forced herself over the line.

XXXVI.

THERE is at least one optimist's corner in every happy home.

Sometimes a cradle stands within it, and a little baby enthroned amidst its downy pillows casts a magic spell over all the troubled hearts that bring their burdens into its presence.

Sometimes it is occupied by a cot on which reposes a body racked with pain, but inhabited by an indomitable spirit, which, like an alchemist, transmutes the coarsest materials of household life to words and smiles of lustrous gold.

Sometimes it is sanctified by the presence of an old grandmother, seated in her arm-chair, and diffusing an influence through the domestic circle that shines like the lamp on the mantel and warms like the fire in the hearth.

For three years there was such a corner in my boyhood home. If there was a frown in that dear old face in all that time, I never saw it. If a harsh word fell from those lips, I never heard it. I have seen tears in those mild, blue eyes, but when they fell they gave

life to the flowers in our hearts like April showers in a garden.

For uncounted hours those old fingers plied the knitting needles, while the thoughts wandered back into the dear, dead past on the feet of memory, or floated into the longed-for future on the wings of faith. Much of the time a Bible lay open upon her lap, and she lowered her spectacles from her forehead to gaze long and lovingly upon some favorite verse which would kindle a smile upon her lips.

Often the Bible gave way to the almanac, from whose pages she learned many a recipe for healing wounds, or baking cakes, and many a wise old saw and many a funny joke. Hard questions were brought to the wise head for solutions. Quarrels came to that just judge for arbitration, and wounded feelings to that loving heart for sympathy. She exalted old age into a beatitude, and in her presence young maidens wished that they were withered and gray.

Her influence was a formative force in my expanding life, and convinced me that at no period in our existence can we have a deeper and more lasting power to affect spirit than when we have become too infirm to mold matter. But the one prime essential in that power is a calm and settled hopefulness.

A despairing old man or woman alienates, repels, and petrifies youth. Pessimism renders the two extremes of life antipathetic. Old age shivers at the laughter of youth, and youth shudders at the tears of old age.

Perhaps this little essay will fall under the eyes of some of the old people who have been "shelved" by the ruthless hand of time. Seated there in your corner, let it persuade you to review the influence you are exerting on the few lives which come in contact with your own. If you think yourselves wronged or neglected, if you cherish dark thoughts in your bosom, you will do more harm in your last few years than you have done good in all the rest. Such is the stern law of nature, and it can not be evadéd.

Be brave, be cheerful, be sweet. If it is harder for you than it is for us, you at least have shorter time to endure the struggle.

Are Edmund Waller's words true of you?

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks which time has
made.

Stronger by weakness wiser men become.
As they draw near to their eternal home."

How is it? Does

"The sunset of life give you mystical lore.
And do coming events cast their shadows be-
fore?"

XXXVII.

“WHY, I could not live a blessed day without an ‘eye-opener’ in the morning and a ‘night-cap’ at bed time,” said Major Jim, in astonishment.

I admit that everybody needs an “eye-opener” and a “night-cap;” but of what shall they consist?

It is a hard thing for any of us who toil manfully in the struggle of life to pull ourselves together in the morning and get wide awake for the duties that lie before us, for somehow the fatigue of yesterday will lap over just a little bit into to-day, and it is the whittling off of this small fraction of unrecovered strength that makes us prematurely old and gray.

Nor is it any easier at night to compose the agitated mind and quivering nerves, when we lie down upon that couch where we have so often vainly courted sleep.

It is no wonder that it is an almost universal craving—this desire for something to arouse us in the morning and quiet us at night. But the old “eye-opener” and “night-cap” have so often turned into the penny that has weighted

down the closed lid and the shroud that has clothed the frozen limbs of the inebriate, that I rise to propose a substitute.

I foresee the amused and condescending smile that will play over the lips of the many Major Jims whose tongues are already watering at the thought of some favorite cordial. But they can neither laugh nor frown me down.

I propose a passage from the Bible as an "eye-opener" in the morning, and one from Shakespeare as a "night-cap" in the evening.

Laugh, if you will, but what you need is a *moral* tonic when you start down town to cope with the problems of your busy day. You need to remember that you are a man; that your life is worthless without honor; that there rests upon your shoulders an eternal weight of responsibility; that you must give an account of the deeds done in the body, when at last you stand before the bar of God. There is nothing else in the world that will so stir the mind and rouse and stimulate the sluggish body as a vivid shock, communicated to the soul by this awful consciousness of the dignity and grandeur of a human life. Throw your toddy out of the window! Open your Bible to Timothy II, 4-7, and read these resounding words:

"I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

Let me tell you that a man filled and thrilled with those words can do ten times the work and bear ten times the trouble, of one whose veins burn with the fires of a glass of old rye!

Truth pours tides of strength into the physical nature through the moral; but alcohol weakens and relaxes the force and power of the soul, as every tippler knows.

And then at evening time, tired, depressed and nervous, stir your slumbering fancy, rouse your drooping imagination, quicken your perceptions of the beautiful, by reading an essay from Emerson, a few stanzas from Browning or an act from Shakespeare. Turn your mind out of its old channels of thought. Acquire the power of mental deflection. Forget the grind, the care of daily life, in the glorious dreams of the poets, Laugh at the story of old Jack Falstaff, the "man of continual dissolution and thaw . . . more than half stewed in grease like a Dutch dish . . . thrown in the Thames and cooled, glowing hot in that surge like a horseshoe."

It is the mind that needs an "eye-opener" and a "night-cap" far more than the body.

XXXVIII.

TWO men were standing in the front part of a "general notion" store in a frontier town in Texas.

They were talking pleasantly and openly until one of them inadvertently dropped a remark which was capable of a double construction.

A leer crept over the face of his companion.

"Reminds me of a story," he said, and looking stealthily around, he asked under his breath, "Are there any ladies here?"

"You need not tell me any story which you would not tell if there were," said the tall young fellow whom he addressed, straightening himself to his full height and turning on his heel.

I saw that with my own eyes, and heard it with my own ears, and so did my friend Dobson. "Makes me feel like a man who had been down in a coal mine or the bottom of the sea, and just come up into God's free air and sunlight," said he.

"I have lived long enough to know," he continued, "that smut will ruin a man's soul sooner than profanity. There is nothing said

against it in the Decalogue, to be sure, but if I were going to add one more precept to that venerable code, it would be, 'Thou shalt not tell an unclean story or smile at a vulgar joke.' I have not listened to one for twenty years, and so long as I have heels to turn upon like that young fellow, or hands to put over my ears, I never expect to hear another, for I loathe them as a mad dog does water."

The fact of the matter is, that no vice bears within its bosom the seeds of a more certain and deadly punishment than impure story telling, for it results, sooner or later, in an utter perversion of that capacity of our soul by which we appreciate and reverence the most beautiful and sacred mystery of life—the mystery of sex.

We come into existence with one pair of eyes and begin at once to make another. Through those of our own manufacture we shall ever more be condemned to gaze upon the objects which surround us.

We slowly make them out of our daily thoughts. There is no escape from the universal law that the man who thinks dark thoughts will see a dark and somber world. Whoever broods over injustice and meditates revenge will see on every hand treachery and wrong. The man who dreams forever of wealth may not acquire the finger of Midas by

which he can turn the objects which he touches into gold, but he is doomed inexorably to see them tinged with its color.

If there is any thing more sure than this in all the world, it is that a man who opens his ears to vulgar jokes is not only doomed, but damned, to lose sight forever more of the holiest and sweetest and purest element of life, and over the faces and forms of men and women and children to see creeping, foul visions, as the victim of the mania-a-potu sees snakes and lizards crawling over every object on which he fixes his gaze.

When a man has groveled his way down into the slavery of a mental habit, by which any one of twenty of the most holy words in human language will summon a flock of nasty jokes and filthy stories out of his memory, as the presence of carrion will fetch the worms out of the ground, he has gotten to the bottom of the bottomless pit. Beyond it degradation does not go.

The man who gains but a poor and partial victory over the imaginations of his brain may indeed deserve our pity; but he who does not wholly subdue his conversation to the ideal law of purity deserves contempt.

There is only one way in which to be able to see men clothed in the true dignity of manhood, and women robed in the regal beauty

and the divine loveliness of womanhood, and that is with a pure mind, and he who misses this vision, misses all.

Let us hold up our right hands and swear that we will never let any one tell us a story that we would not listen to in the presence of our mothers, wives, and sweethearts.

XXXIX.

THE good Doctor, who had been conscientiously devoting himself to the children of other people during a long, hard year, came up to the country for his vacation.

"I am going to become acquainted with my own family," he said. "I am going to be a boy with my boys."

It was a large contract, for, although a man at fifty is not old, he is not a spring chicken.

It naturally seems to a man who is a man among men as if it were easy enough to be a boy among boys—until he tries it.

They led him a chase, those three lads of nine, eleven and thirteen. He was not superstitious about the number thirteen when he first came; but now he is, and not only about thirteen, but about eleven and nine also.

His first test was one of endurance.

He started in with them at 8:30 in the morning, to gather butterflies and birds' nests. At 11 they were just getting a good start; but he was lying flat on his back under the shade of an apple tree too tired even to eat. After dinner he flung himself upon a couch, and it was 3 o'clock before he opened his

first eye, and 3:30 when the lid of the second slowly lifted.

The little "Doctors" were ready for him, and they started for a bicycle ride. At 6 o'clock the procession appeared, with the "Old Man" bringing up the rear, travel-worn, long-faced and scarcely able to push his wheel up the driveway to the side door.

The youngsters begged him to go out with them after supper to masquerade with long white robes and a pumpkin lantern; but he winked beseechingly to his wife, and said: "I have some work to do up-stairs, boys, which can not be postponed; but I will be with you to-morrow." His wife followed him up to the chamber, and he explained. "I hope I may be forgiven, but that very difficult and imperative 'work' was getting into bed." With her assistance and the use of a bottle of witch-hazel, he succeeded. It was the first of a long list of prevarications.

In the morning he crawled out of bed, stiff and sore, but full of grit.

They told him they were going to fish a trout stream four miles away. He gasped and asked them if it could be reached by a buggy drive. "Oh, no," they said; "It is over that range of hills." He looked, sighed, started, and came home at night, a mere shadow of himself. "Half-cooked brook trout, roasted field corn,

hard-boiled eggs and green apples have produced a slight indisposition," he said to the landlady, with a sickly smile, as he sidled past the supper table to the bedroom.

But the climax came the next day, when the young hopefuls invited him to a game of "mumblety-peg," or "mumble-the-peg," or however it may be spelled.

He was pretty stiff for squatting down like a Turk, and his knees snapped as he did so. "Once down, never up," he muttered under his breath.

The knife went round, each little Doctor scoring several points in turn. It reached "the old man." He failed once, twice, three times—ten—then vowed the butt end was loaded, and tried his own.

There could be only one denouement. "Pop's got to pull the peg," screamed little Bill, dancing like a wild Indian, and rushing into the house to call the boarders. They came, gathered round in a circle, watched the delighted Jim sharpen the peg, submit to the blindfold bandage, and with ten carefully delivered blows drive that short peg out of sight.

The "Patriarch" (the antediluvian," as he called himself privately to his wife) took off his coat, put his spectacles in their case, adjusted his false teeth, kneeled down and thrust his muzzle pegward. He gnawed, he

bit, he dug, and rose for breath looking more like a razor-backed hog than an elegant city doctor.

“Boys,” he said humbly, “can I dig a hole for my nose?” Little Bill said “No,” but Jim and Tom assented.

“Down he went again, and after five minutes he came up with the peg, but a porcelain tooth was gone !

“Rooting for the Reds did n’t help you much in rooting for pegs, did it, Pop?” screamed the irreverent son of a well-known Cincinnati base-ball crank.

XL.

THE little lamplighter came zig-zagging down Burnet avenue. The gas jets popped into flame, first upon one side of the street and then upon the other, as he pursued his Godlike mission.

"How do you like your job?" I asked, as he trudged along with his ladder over his shoulder and his torch in his hand, a Prometheus in embryo.

"They always give the meanest jobs to the littlest fellows," he answered.

"How can one job be worse than another when the lamps are all of the same height and equally far apart?" I inquired.

"Oh, but they give us all the 'run-backs,'" he replied.

"And what in the world is a 'run-back?'"

"Why," said the boy, "they are little, short



side streets, down which we have to go and run back, with nothing to do on the return trip."

"Little man," said I, "do n't commence to kick about having all the hard jobs and 'run-backs' before you are out of your knickerbockers. The longer you live the more 'run-backs' you will have. There is not a job in the whole wide world which is n't full of them."

"Why, there is the mayor, now. He don't have any."

"Don't he?" I replied. "I reckon by the time he gets through with all his work and the office seekers, and creeps off to bed, he thinks the whole job is a 'run-back.'"

"Well, how about a preacher?" he insinuated.

"Let that pass, my boy," I answered. "I would rather you thought I had no troubles than to have you remember me as complaining about them. But just lean your ladder against that lamp-post and sit on the third round, so that your head will be on a level with mine. There, that is good. Now, listen.

"There are drawbacks in every career. You call them 'run-backs.' It is all the same. All along the pathway of life there are toll-gates, where the travelers have to pay a fraction of their time, their strength, their money,

their very life, for the privilege of continuing on their journeys.

“Those who travel over one road never see the toll-gates on the other, and the mean ones are forever fretting and stewing because they have to pay so much more than any one else. It is bad enough to hear an old man moaning over the drawbacks of his life, but it is intolerable to hear it from a little boy. If you want to make every one despise you, just keep repeating this complaint you have made to me.

“If you want everybody to love and honor you—yes, if you want to achieve success—take your ‘run-backs’ without a murmur.

“When the good God gives us our medicine there is always a little bitter with the sweet, and we must not always be making wry faces over it.

“Keep your torch full of oil, light every gas-lamp on your route, whistle merrily while you make your ‘run-backs,’ carry your wages home to your mother, be a good boy, and youll be a noble man. Good-night.”

XLI.

TREMBLING, anxious, and harried, poor Dobson stood by the desk, and said: "Give me another chance, for God's sake! I am working night and day. The times are hard. Be merciful!"

Hobson's face hardened. A gleam like that from a sword flashed from his eyes. "Business is business," he answered, and his jaws shut like a steel trap.

Yes, business is business! Just as gravity is gravity; fire, fire; and lightning, lightning.

But gravity is for floating birds and vessels, as well as dragging people over precipices; fire is for baking bread, and roasting meat, as well as burning houses; electricity is for lighting cities and running street cars, as well as for splitting mountains!

If there is an element of mercy and helpfulness in gravity, fire, and lightning, surely there may also be in business!"

"Business is business," is a phrase which, in a different sense from "charity," "covers a multitude of sins."

I know how inexorable the laws of business are. You must get more than you pay. You

must demand an equivalent of service for wages. You must not buy what you can not sell. You must compete successfully, or be crushed mercilessly. Such, and a thousand other stern and unutterable principles, stalk like pitiless policemen up and down the streets where human beings toil and sweat.

Poetry, romance, sentiment, imagination, will no more create wealth or prevent failure in the mart of trade than they will create a tidal wave or stop a flood.

But a merchant who does not temper his business judgment with mercy is a devil, and not a man. If there is any place on earth where "mercy and truth should meet together and righteousness and peace should kiss each other," 'tis in the counting-room.

Hobson, do you know how long before you will stand in Dobson's shoes? Even while you read, your coal barge may be burning on the Ohio, your ships sinking in the sea like the *Argosy* of Antonio, your workmen striking, your cashier defaulting, your rivals plotting!

You had better tell Dobson to sit down a moment, while you retire to your private room and put up that little prayer your mother taught you—

"That mercy I to others show
That mercy show to me."

Hobson, the trouble with you is, that you think that "success" is the one criterion of manhood, and justification of conduct. Let me tell you that sometimes failure is a supreme duty! What right have you to crush poor Dobson? Do you owe him nothing because he is a man? Is a man a worm, Hobson, that you can tread on him or bait a hook with him at will!

"Allah is Allah!" cries the Turk, and spits a baby on his sword, rapes a woman, burns a city, or devastates a province!

"Business is business!" cries Hobson, and turns off a consumptive typewriter, defrauds a trustful creditor, or crushes poor Dobson like an eggshell!

You are your own judge now, Hobson, and if that motto seems to justify your infamy, go on! But the faster you go and the further you go, the nearer you come to a tribunal where you will be "hoist with your own petard."

I can imagine no worse punishment than having the poor creditors whom you have crushed, follow you around among the stars, crying, "Business is business, Hobson, business is business!"

How long since you read those words of the gentle Portia?

“The quality of mercy is not strain’d;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the blessed place beneath; it is twice
 bless’d;
’Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of Kings—
But mercy is above this scepter’d sway,
It is enthroned in the heart of Kings,
It is an attribute of God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God’s
Where mercy seasons justice.”

Business is business, Hobson; but mercy is
business, too!

XLII.

THEY had met for the first time since boyhood, and were dining together.

One of them was ruddy, rubicund, and jolly. The word "success" was written upon his forehead as plainly as if it had been put there in purple ink by a rubber stamp.

The other was pale, a trifle stooped, serious, chastened, and gave you the impression that he had struggled hard with the great foes of human happiness, and grappled long with the problems of human destiny.

They were powerfully attracted to each other by old memories, and similar associations with the past, but they were suffering under an unconfessed feeling of repulsion by the consciousness of present tendencies in opposite directions of thought and feeling. Their hearts were drawn together at one moment, as if about to meet in perfect sympathy, and then just as they almost touched, flew apart like two objects charged from the opposite poles of an electric battery.

At length the pale man drew from his pocket-book a clipping from a newspaper, and passed it across the table, saying to his friend,

"What do you think of that, Jo? Does it come any-where near expressing the true facts about our lives in this strange world?"

He drew his gold-bowed glasses from their case, adjusted them to his nose in his lordly fashion, and read aloud these words:

"There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,
No glory but by braving shame,
Nor justice but by taking blame."

Laying the paper down by his finger-bowl, he put his glasses back in their case, looked up with one of those smiles which covered his face as the summer sunlight covers a broad landscape, and answered sententiously:

"Sounds to me like Tommy-rot, Frank."

"Yes?" replied his companion in one of those interrogatives which implies a difference of opinion without the desire for debate.

It would have been like pouring water on a duck's back to tell that sleek, well-fed embryonic man who never knew a loss, who never had seen a death, who never had suffered shame, who never had voluntarily borne another's blame, the deep secrets of man's mortal life!

The plowshare of sorrow must prepare the soil in such a heart before the seeds of divine wisdom will sprout.

Frank knew this.

The great truths written in that quatrain had come home to his own heart through many deep experiences which were sacred secrets.

These truths are esoteric by the very nature of things. The inner circle of students who are near to the heart of nature may go forth from her shrine and babble them never so loudly, and only the chosen ones will understand.

The name of the door to that inner sanctuary is sorrow. It never opens except to him who comes in tears.

The prosperous, unscathed, unchastened man may know all the exoteric doctrines, politics, science, finance; but poetry, philosophy, and religion have a language of their own, which only the sufferer can comprehend.

Do not blame Nature for cruelly withholding her divinest knowledge. She proclaims these doctrines from the housetops. All hear, but none can understand until the hour of suffering comes. 'Tis then the door opens!

Frank told me that the truths contained in those four lines had made a profounder impression of the indescribable grandeur of existence upon his own mind than all the facts of modern science.

"Are they worth all it cost you to learn them?" I asked.

He answered, "Yes, and more, for joys only impregnate, while sorrows bring forth."

If you do not understand them now, you can at least commit them to memory, and some day, beside a coffin, or upon a cross, their divine meaning will come to you with an all-illuminating and an all-sustaining power.

"There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,
No glory but by bearing shame,
Nor justice but by taking blame."

XLIII.

“LET me out at Shillito street,” she said in a strident voice, as she threw herself into a seat in an Avondale car.

The conductor bestowed upon her a distant bow.

“Is this Shillito?” she asked, nervously, when we turned the corner at Hunt and Broadway. The conductor moved his head solemnly from right to left.

“This must be Shillito,” she ejaculated, springing to her feet as McGregor avenue came in sight. The conductor stared coldly and impassively at her, without giving a sign.

“Do n’t you forget to let me off at Shillito,” she screamed, as we passed Oak street without stopping. The conductor fixed his keen blue eyes upon her, holding her as the Ancient Mariner did the Wedding Guest.

“Shillito!” he shouted. She gathered her bundles together and swept out of the car like a hurricane, followed by a glance of scorn that would have withered her to a dry stalk if she could have appreciated it.

I caught the conductor’s eye after he had unhooked it from the retreating figure, and as

my glance was full of sympathy, he said: "If this was my private car, she could n't ride for five dollars a trip."

"She did not seem to have much confidence in you," I responded.

"That was what galled me," he answered. "What a man needs is to have people trust him. No man in the world can do his best work in an atmosphere of suspicion. The way to appeal to a man's honor is to believe in him."

Now, I know from personal experience that there are few things that try a man's faith more than to ask a conductor to put him off at a certain place on a new line, and then to sit perfectly quiet while the car passes street after street, with the conductor looking as if he were building castles in Spain! But what the conductor asked was only justice, and what he said was right, and I want to bear testimony to the claims that the conductors have upon our confidence.

I have traveled the Avondale road for two years, and have yet to see the first ungentlemanly act of a conductor, or hear the first discourteous word from one of them. I have often wondered if they were as polite in their private life as they are in the public cars, and whether they never "talk back" when off duty.

Some people keep all their cross words and sour looks for the loved ones at home. Politeness to customers is paid for. It is gratis to friends.

Street car conductors are the greatest of social levelers. They are animated weighing machines, into the slots of which we drop our nickles, only to find that the social specific gravity of Dives and Lazarus is identical.

I wish that we were all thus forced to abolish class distinctions. I feel a deep pity for waiters in restaurants and porters in sleeping cars, who are under almost irresistible pressure to measure men by that hateful standard, a "tip." There is a grim satisfaction in being able to say to one's self, "This offensive snob has no more claims upon me than that timid woman in the faded shawl."

I love to be in a car where wage earners, with their hard hands and plain clothing, sit down by the side of the lady of society at whose throat burn diamonds, and beside the scholar, whose face reveals a daily communion with the great scenes of history.

There is no other place where I so feel the essential "oneness" of humanity as in a street car. There I become unusually sensible of the universal brotherhood of man.

XLIV.

IN a vine-shaded porch beneath my study window there is a gorgeous and communicative parrot. In conversation he is disobliging ; but in soliloquies and epigrams he is incomparable.

There are no funnier stories than those told about parrots. They are saturated with wisdom, and have the delicious flavor of antiquity. All of them, no doubt, can be traced to the days when the bronzed sailor-boys or the bearded travelers came back to the palaces on the Nile, from far away Ophir or the tropical glades in the heart of Africa. Here are two of the stories :

“ The new minister was growing eloquent in his eulogy over the body of a man who had been the terror of his family and the shame of his neighborhood. A parrot who had studied the habits of the deceased for many years interrupted him with the harsh cry, ‘ You talk too much ; you talk too much.’ ” So runs the old, old tale, and no new one can be invented to displace it. That was the trouble with many people whom I used to know. They talked too much.

"A gentleman (?) was trying to teach his parrot to say 'uncle.'

" 'Say uncle,' he said. The bird was silent. 'Say uncle,' he shouted. The parrot bestowed upon him a glassy stare. 'Say uncle,' he screamed. Polly gave an exasperating wink.

" 'Take that,' said his infuriated teacher, wringing his neck and throwing him out of the window. In the afternoon he wandered into the garden to examine a young brood of valuable chickens.

" The parrot stood near the coop, with one of them in his claw. 'Say unclè!' he croaked, and upon the third refusal he wrung the chicken's neck, and threw him down, crying 'Take that.'

" It was the last chicken of the twelve."

This used to be a favorite method in ecclesiastical circles, but we are getting so far Christianized now that we say "please," and it is becoming unpopular to wring people's necks for refusing to say denominational "uncles."

There may not be such immortal humor in the head of my neighbor's parrot, but he is full of sound and irrepressible common sense.

" Well, well, well," he says, and after a

little reflection—"It's all right! It's all right!"

I have occasionally been in a frame of mind, since the bird has been occupying the porch, when his words sounded decidedly personal. To be sitting here wishing that something or other was something else, and here a voice from the outside world cry, "Well, well, well. It's all right; it's all right!" is startling, if not grewsome.

But the parrot is correct, and I know it. Somehow or other "it's all right," or it would not be so, and if he can sit there in his narrow cage, wishing himself away in the shadows of some gorgeous forest in the tropics, plucking the luscious berries and crooning by the side of his mate, and then comfort himself with that profound philosophy of his, I am a little bit ashamed to let him be more of a man than I am!

"Well, well, well. It's all right; it's all right!"

"Cribbed, cabined and confined," we all are. Hemmed in by our mortal limitations, manacled by some sorrow, loaded with some burden, we chafe and fret and fight against the fixed and changeless laws of nature and the unalterable laws of God.

How foolish it all is! Millions of other captives have occupied the cage before us, and

while many of them have worn their wings out, beating them against the bars, and some have devoured their own hearts in wretchedness, countless brave and believing ones have settled down to the sweet, old faith of God's parrot and his saints, "It's all right; it's all right!"

XLV.

I FOUND the Doctor standing in the corner of a meadow, his hands folded across his breast, and a drop of moisture on either cheek, which, although the day was hot, had not the qualities of perspiration.

He was gazing at a patch of elder bushes and golden-rods, which were all matted together in the angles of a stake-and-rider fence.

An opening had been cut into this miniature forest, and a clearing made. We could just see from where we were a rude oven, constructed of flat stone and the broken top of an old cook stove. Near it stood a table consisting of a rough board, resting in the "Y's" of some forked stakes. On its top were fragments of china dishes, and around it were blocks of wood for chairs.

We moved toward it by a common impulse, stooped low, entered, and sat down. A few moments passed in silence, broken only by the wild song of a bob-o-link, which had dropped down upon the top of a mullein weed in the meadow, and which we heard only as men hear music in their dreams. Our thoughts had drifted backward thirty years or more,

and were floating among the scenes of childhood.

“What’s the matter, old man?” said I at last. (He had nine more gray hairs than I.) “What are you thinking about?”

I spoke gently, fancying that I could read his thoughts, and when he answered, his voice was very quiet, and had something of a childish treble in its tone.

“There was just such a meadow as this in Penfield,” he answered, “and we reached it by a long lane through which the cows scamp-ered in the morning, and dawdled back at night with bursting udders. In a corner of that meadow there was just such a bower—elderberry bushes, golden-rods, cook stove, china dishes, and all.

“Many a long Saturday afternoon have I spent in it, with a coterie of blissful, blessed little aborigines, innocent and happy as the first family in Paradise. Never did food taste so good as the tarts and crullers and biscuit and jam gathered surreptitiously from pantries, closets, and cellars.

“Never was companionship so sweet, never talk so sparkling, never beauty so adorable, never courtesy so genuine.

“I have broken bread in my day at the tables of princes. I have heard humorists who have set a Nation in a roar, poets who

have voiced the unuttered emotions of a people's heart, legislators who have made its laws, generals who have saved its institutions—crack their wittiest jokes, utter their profoundest epigrams, narrate their most thrilling stories, recite their sweetest songs, at tables covered with silver dishes, in mansions decorated with consummate art; but the memories of those feasts in the elderberry arbor throw them all into the shade. I would give more to live over again one of those glorious”—

Just then we heard children's voices.

“Let us run,” said I.

“By no means,” replied the Doctor. “It is an answer to prayer!”

The bushes parted. A bevy of children entered and stood wide-eyed upon the threshold.

“My little lords and ladies,” said the Doctor in that voice that soothed the suffering, encouraged the timid, and strengthened the dying, “let us stay. We will be good and quiet.”

The young cavaliers frowned at first, and laid their hands upon their swords. For a few moments the little dames were shy. But the gentle Doctor disarmed distrust, and in a few moments little white arms, bared to the shoulders, were setting the tables, little red lips were giving orders, little bare feet were

running errands, big knees were crunched under low tables, old hearts were young again, long years of struggle and pain were forgotten, and we once more ate ambrosia and drank nectar in the Garden of the Gods.

XLVI.

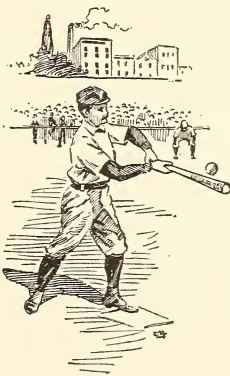
THE baseball player who makes a sacrifice hit, hits the crowd as well as the ball.

Perhaps a three-bagger would put him at the top of the batting list for the season, and, like us all, he has his own ambitions. But no matter. There are two men on bases. He stands beside the plate. The first ball is an easy curve, a sheer temptation. With a quick act of self-suppression and a muttered "get thee behind me, Satan," he bunts it lightly and goes out at first.

The fans howl, for he has advanced the runners by a sacrifice of himself.

We call it a sacrifice hit, but it is not a hit that is sacrificed. It is a man.

We do not go to ball games for sermons, but every sacrifice hit of every sort in life is a sermon and a sacrament. It is a revelation of the deepest and most sacred principle of nature.



"It is expedient that one man die for the people."

In the early dawn of life, our barbarous ancestors made these sacrifices; but, mark you, not of themselves. Vaguely discerning that all desires were gained, and all ambitions realized, only by the loss of something else, by some deprivation or surrender, they tried to obey the law by sacrificing birds and beasts, and even human beings.

The turning point in the history of humanity came when the Carpenter of Nazareth sacrificed himself. And here upon the ball field you behold a gleam of the same principle that flashed forth in immortal beauty on Calvary. The individual sacrifices himself for the cause, for the mass, for others! The one man is only one-ninth of the team. Eight-ninths are greater than one-ninth. The reputation of the team, the success of the cause demands the sacrifice, and whether it is Buck Ewing, McPhee or "Dusty" Miller, the victim lays himself upon the altar.

So does the mother for her babe, the sailor for his vessel, the engineer for his passengers, the nurse for her patient, the patriot for his country, the shepherd for his flock, the martyr for his cause. The whole tendency of civilization is toward the universal adoption of this principle. Slowly, painfully, with perpetual strug-

gles against it and repudiations of it, the mighty scheme unfolds.

There is a clearer perception of it to-day than there was yesterday, and there will be a profounder allegiance to it to-morrow than to-day.

No government, no church, no business, no family is safe until every individual subordinates himself to the institution.

One selfish, ambitious player who persistently refuses to sacrifice himself for the others can wreck the strongest team in America.

"Sacrifice yourself for the pennant, for a single run, yes, for a single base." Such is the categorical imperative of the great National sport.

Personally, I get more pleasure out of sacrifice hits than home runs, just as I get more pleasure out of the contemplation of the character of Wilberforce than of Rothschild, of Washington than Vanderbilt, of old John Brown than Jay Gould.

I know some people whose lives consist of a long series of "sacrificial hits." They are beautiful lives. They may never reach first base, but by one of the paradoxes of nature they will make a great "home run."

XLVII.

IN one of our summer rambles we stumbled upon a snake in the act of swallowing a toad.

To us it was a horrible tragedy, but the repose of the actors was like that of wax figures in a dime museum.

There was not a perceptible motion in either body, as, yielding to the irresistible suction, the toad slid slowly backward into the reptilian esophagus.

Not the slightest expression of gustatory pleasure could be discerned in the eye of the snake, nor of death terror in that of the toad.

So far as any exhibition of emotion was concerned, we would have seen as much in watching a bullet slide down a gun barrel.

"Horrible!" screamed the girls from Smith College. "Make him disgorge."

I did so, rapping the sinuous body smartly with a cane.

Without a murmur of disappointment the snake threw up his meal, and without a smile of thanks the toad hopped out of the jaws of his living grave.

"What made you do that?" exclaimed a couple of young Freshmen. "You have spoiled our study of a natural phenomenon."

"Natural phenomenon!" sputtered the girls. "Do you think we shall stand by and permit this act of monstrous cruelty to go on in order that you may coolly observe a natural phenomenon?"

"Which is the more cruel," replied the Freshmen, with a blunt and almost brutal directness, "to save the life of the toad and starve the snake, or save the snake by the sacrifice of the toad? Come, now, which horn of the dilemma will you take?"

Under cover of the excitement and confusion which this question created, I slipped away, for fear they would refer it to me.

I took the professor by the button-hole and drew him after me to a quiet spot in the forest.

"Reminds me of what Madame Blavatsky declared she saw in India," he said, leaning meditatively against a tree. "There was a hospital (founded three thousand years before Christ), where the nurses were bestowing the most tender care upon all sorts of sick animals. Out in the court-yard a human being lay upon the ground in the broiling sunlight, covered with a swarm of insects. 'What does this mean?' said Madame Blavatsky, overcome

with horror. 'Oh,' responded her guide indifferently, 'a holy man is feeding himself to the ants. That spot is never vacant. As soon as one is devoured another takes his place!'"

I was quiet for a long time, and so was the professor, and we listened to the hum of insects upon whom the little birds fed, and shuddered as we saw a hawk in the heavens looking for the birds.

"Could you answer the Freshmen's question?" said the professor to me at last.

"No," said I, "could you?"

"No."

A few more minutes passed in silence, during which the awful feast of the higher forms of life upon the lower, went on to the caressing music of whispering breezes and babbling brooks.

"How do you keep your mind from being thrown off its balance and plunged into horror by this spectacle of universal carnage?" I inquired at last.

"I throw myself back in a sublime solitariness upon God," he replied, instinctively quoting a phrase of Frederick Robinson's.

"How do you?"

"That is my way, too," I answered.

After a few moments of silence, our minds were drawn away from these tragic phases of

existence by birds piping and squirrels chattering in the tree tops, butterflies flitting among the flowers, fishes darting through the waters, and above all, by the voices of the boys and girls, who were laughing and singing college songs.

We must not always "look upon the dark side of things," said the professor, "but more often laugh and sing."

XLVIII.

I WAS coming down town on a Sycamore street cable car and the gripman lost his grip.

I wish he had been the only man in Cincinnati who had "lost his grip," or that all the rest of them could recover theirs as easily as he did his. I can tell a man who has "lost his grip" almost as quickly as I see him, and I think there are few sadder sights.

His eye is downcast, his voice is subdued, his manner is deprecatory. The great cable of success runs swiftly through his hands, but he strives in vain to clutch it. He sees multitudes of other men seize it and go spinning up the steep grades to wealth or power or fame, but, to save his life, he can not catch on.

It is an experience which excites in many of us bitterness and despair. We blame the cable, or the Great Power that propels it, or the exceptional few who have grasped it—every body and every thing but ourselves.

And yet there come to us calm and lucid moments, when in the light that often flashes upon life, we see with clearest vision that it is because we are too old, too weak, too ignorant,

or perhaps too tender and too true. For there are some prizes in this life that only those can gain who let the great cables drag them down into shame and unworthiness.

Yes, we lose our grip, not so much because the cable stops or breaks, as because the foot has lost its fleetness, the eye its brightness, the hand its cunning, or the mind its alertness.

And yet life's great peril does not lie so much in the fact that we have lost the cable, as in the fact that we have lost confidence in ourselves. If you have begun to grow timid and distrustful, and to say to yourself "there is nothing in me; I shall never succeed; I was born a failure," you may be certain you will never "catch on" until you fight those unworthy thoughts down and out. Believe in yourself. You great, big, earnest, brave-hearted fellow! that mood of despondency is unworthy of you! You may have lost so much by letting go, that you will never be what you might have been. But to say that there is no place for you in the world, and that there is nothing to live for—never! It is unworthy of you. Pull yourself together. Keep clutching on the cable. You will surely get another hold.

But let me drop a quiet word into your ear. The cable of "success" is not the only one that is slipping over the eternal wheels.

There is another one, longer, stronger, running up over a high hill, through green pastures and beside still waters, gently, smoothly, without a break or jar. Many a man who has lost the other has seized this, and thanked God for the change.

There is something to live for beside success, even if the scampering, heedless, crazy masses do not think so.

What society needs is a multitude of just such quiet, chastened, gentle people as you will be, when you get the mad fever of "worldliness" out of your veins and settle down to taste the real sweetness of life.

XLIX.

THERE was an empty car just behind ours, and we were running full tilt down the long grade of the Reading road.

The motorman knew his business, and with his eyes fixed upon the track, his foot upon the bell, and his hand upon the lever, he let her slide, paying no more attention to the people who stood at the crossings, signaling him to stop than to the hitching posts, gas lamps, and telegraph poles.

At Fern street an elegantly dressed lady raised her jeweled finger, as if it could stop not only a street car, but a planet. We shot past, and her look of complacent confidence turned to one of astonished indignation.

"There are others," shouted a small boy from the rear platform.

A young swell stepped majestically down from the curb at McMillan street and walked out toward the track, never deigning even to look up and make a sign.

Whiz—went the car, and as we passed, he shot a shower of angry sparks from his flashing eyes.

"There are others," cried the soothing small boy.

At McGregor avenue a gaunt and worried woman with a market basket on her arm stood in the middle of the road, wildly waving a faded umbrella and gesticulating with all the features of her face.

A cloud of dust enveloped her, and through the whirling veil we saw her pass her umbrella to her left hand, and, with her clenched fist, threaten the conductor's life.

"There are others!" screamed the small boy, in a voice melodious with consolation.

To rich and poor, to high and low, to the astonished, the disappointed, the indignant, and the despairing, without regard to age or sex, the young hope-bringer sent out his "There-are-others" message.

And there were others--many others--one every three minutes or so, some crowded, some half full, and some practically empty.

What was the use of standing on the corner whining and fretting? The small boy could not tell, nor can I.

There are others--take the next car!

A blind man could see through that parable, you would think.

But there will be more than one poor soul who reads these words who will scorn the analogy, and declare that for him the very last car has gone by without stopping!

"I stood here," he will tell us pleadingly,

“by the great highway, eager, earnest, full of hope, and one after another the golden opportunities of life rushed past.”

He forgot to tell us how he was too late for one, and asleep at another, and idling by a third!

“But, however, they are gone,” says he.

And gone they are, the best of them, perhaps. For they are not alike, like the street cars—these golden chariots—our opportunities!

There is perhaps always a best one, and a next best, and so on down the line, and you may have indeed missed the great climactic chance of life.

But there are others!

There is always a next best, and a next!

Look up the track! Give heed to the words of the hope-bringer!

Take the next car!

For all you know, a chance may now be bearing down upon you out of the unknown, to retrieve your lost fortune, to regain your lost position, to realize your pet ambition, to do more than you have ever done, to be more than you have ever been!

But, beware! Paradox though it may seem! There is always a last car! It will be serious business to lose that!

L.

AT the close of the Revolutionary War the thirteen colonies passed through a strange experience.

They were bound together by common interests, but not by common laws. They were the staves of a cask which had never been "assembled."

And so, whenever men met to discuss the political situation and their plans for a Federal Union, this was the toast that was always proposed:

"Here's a hoop for the barrel!"

That hoop was the constitution of the United States of America.

If you have never had to hoop a barrel, you may take my word that it is not an easy task. Hanging window curtains and putting up stove pipes is thought by men of circumscribed experience to be the acme of life's difficulties; but those feats are merely child's play, compared to hooping an old washtub or vinegar barrel, which has been allowed to stand in the sun until it has fallen apart.

The immortal author of the Mother Goose

rhymes has declared that nothing is harder than getting a broken egg together.

“ Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall ;
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall ;
And all the King’s horses and all the King’ men
Could n’t put Humpty together again.”

I had rather put together a whole basket of broken eggs than one barrel.

A Scotch minister was brought before his presbytery to be tried for a sacrilegious fit of laughter which overcame him in the pulpit.

He exonerated himself by saying that “ Just as I began my sermon, I saw, through the open door of the church, the town ‘ fool ’ passing with an immense bucket of water upon his head. And as the devil would have it, at that very instant, the hoops dropped down over his silly pate, the staves tumbled apart, and he was baptized by a sprinkling which would almost pass for immersion.”

I dare assert that the poor fool, although he might be strong enough to carry a whole bucket upon his head, was not wise enough to hoop up a broken one.

There are other barrels besides the wrangling states in an incipient Federal Government, which badly need “ hooping up.”

I might name several families which are all

tumbling apart for lack of paternal government. And I have also seen some, which might have held together for many long and happy years, if there had been true love to bind them.

Old "Hoard His Money" left an enormous "barrel" to his son John; but he did not give his son the common sense to keep its staves together. They have fallen apart and the contents are spilled.

"Here's a hoop to your barrel," John.

But the worst case of all is that of a youngster whom I know, who is going to pieces for lack of a supreme principle and purpose in life. Bright? I should say so—staves enough to make as fine a barrel as ever carried hope and joy through earth to heaven. Wit, kindness, talents of all kinds—every thing in the world but a hoop.

It is pitiful to see him. All gone to pieces—but

"Here's a hoop to your barrel," my boy.

"Hard to gather the staves up, put on the hoop and hammer it down?" Yes. No wonder that men affirm that it requires more than human skill and power. "Needs divine help," they say.

But what is your life worth now, with your health broken, your energies dissipated and your resources scattered?

If there is any power in earth or heaven that will help you to pull yourself together, you had better summon it to your aid, and we old fellows, who love you, will stand behind you with the old Colonial toast :

“ Here’s a hoop to your barrel.”

LI.

“**Y**OU are discharged, sir,” thundered the Boss to old Grumpy.

“What for?” he snapped.

“For standing in your own light! You are like a man who has been given a lantern to do



his work by on a dark night, and who fastens it to the nape of his neck, instead of on his forehead. You are perpetually working in the shadow of your own miserable, egotistical, unhappy self. Here are your wages. Good-by.”

Have you ever noticed that the most of the people who live in darkness are standing in their own light?

There is a true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Is that too sweeping? Well, let us, with a

tear of sympathy, drop out of our consideration to-day those pitiful creatures who enter life without the God-like gift of reason.

For all the rest of us there is light enough in the world to help us make our journey safely through it. Even the goose finds light enough in the world to help her paddle and quack her way through life. The poor snail, the blind mole, the feeblest creature that swims in the sea, floats in the air, or walks upon or burrows in the ground, finds light enough to solve the problems of existence.

And yet men like old Grumpy, curse the world and the whole system of things for being a dark and tangled labyrinth, in which everybody is bound to be bruised and wrecked and lost.

For one, I discovered long ago that when I found myself in any darkness, it was of my own making. This life is full of insoluble mysteries, and I know as little about them as anybody. But when it comes to the practical problem of living a cheerful, useful, contented, and satisfying existence, I know that when men fail, it is not because the world is full of darkness; but because they stand in their own light and grovel in shadows of their own casting.

Do you think that the women who are living lives of shame among us did not see a clear

beam of light shining upon them from the sanctuary of their own souls when they turned aside from the right path? As surely as God has armed a dove or a deer with the instinct of self-preservation, He endowed these women with the instinct of virtue.

Will you tell me that a murderer does not walk in the light when he begins his series of crimes? I will answer you, with a still greater assurance, that he does deliberately turn his back to a flood of it—to stand in shadows cast by his own passions.

Do you believe that the multitudes around us, who are all tangled up in trouble, manacled to vicious companions, engaged in illegitimate business, staggering, trembling amidst dangers and sorrows, did not have light enough to keep them out of these troubles, if they had wanted to be kept out? This is to deny the reasonableness of nature, and plunge one's self into a "state of permanent intellectual confusion."

There is enough light in life to enable any man to reach his goal. When we walk in darkness, it is because we stand in our own light. We make our own eclipses. Every man knows how to do better than he does. He sees further than he travels. There is more light than he uses, and more would shine if he did but walk in it.

“What can I do for you?” said the King to the Philosopher.

“Stand out of my light!” he answered.

No doubt kings have obscured much light that might have fallen upon philosophers, but the deepest shadows across their paths have ever been of their own throwing.

“Stand out of your own light,” Grumpy. You have done more to make yourself miserable by your suspicious, complaining, shirking, wretched disposition than all the bad laws on our statute books and other reviled men and conditions all put together.

LII.

THE Commercial Tribune will find its way into many homes this morning where people think they have little enough reason for giving thanks.

The vacant chair by the fireside, the gaunt form of hunger brooding over the table, the pale figure of misfortune shivering in a corner—ah! how different it all is, from that happy scene a year ago!

There will be multitudes of people saying, in the bitterness of their hearts, “Thanksgiving! What have we to give thanks for?”

Perhaps you will have the heart to listen to a true story, even though you might resent a sermon.

Fifteen or twenty years ago a certain Mr. Ladd, the richest citizen in Portland, Ore., was stricken with paralysis and lost the use of his limbs. It filled his heart with bitterness and rebellion, and, like Job’s wife, he was ready to curse God and die.

One day he was being pushed around his lawn in a wheel cart, and was gazing at the grass and flowers with a soul as unresponsive as death.

Suddenly he heard a cheerful voice cry out, "Good morning, Mr. Ladd, I hope you are enjoying yourself the day."

"How can I enjoy myself?" he answered, surlily.

"Like meself," came the almost gay reply.

Looking down upon the sidewalk the great banker saw a shrunken figure in a wheelcart like his own.

"And are you happy? How is that possible?" he asked, in amazement.

"Ten years ago," said the poor Irishman, "they took me to the hospital. The doctor examined me and said: 'Pat, you will never walk again.'

"In the name of God," said I, 'what will a poor man like me do?'

"You must keep in the sunshine and be joyful and happy,' says he. And I've minded him."

Tears sprang to the eyes of the rich banker as he gazed on the peaceful face of the pauper.

"Wheel me into the house," he said to his nurse. Summoning his family to his side, from the depths of a full heart he spoke these words (which he repeated to me with his own lips): "I have been a miserable, wicked and ungrateful man; but the days of my ingratitude are numbered. Henceforth, with the

help of God, I will live in the sunshine, and be joyful and happy."

He never walked a step, and for the balance of his life was carried from his door to his carriage and from his carriage to his bank ; but his heart was full of love and gratitude to God.

Did you ever know that gratitude is an art, a sort of divine knack ?

People do not have to have "things" in order to be grateful ! Things do not produce gratitude ! Gratitude is awakened in the heart like the sense of beauty. Artists see beautiful visions in barracks, garrets, prisons ! Musicians hear divine melodies in tempests ! Sculptors behold beautiful forms in rough blocks of marble ! Grateful people feel gratitude in sickness, misfortune, loneliness, poverty !

Does that seem strange ? Ah ! there are many strange things.

But if gratitude is not an independent feeling in the soul—if it is simply a vulgar result proportioned to riches or luxury, why are so many rich people so miserable and ungrateful ? Tell me that !

I am not bound to explain this mystery ; but it is very important for us to know the fact—that gratitude does not depend for its existence in the soul, on abundance of luxury !

Elder Brewster, the minister to the Pilgrim

Fathers, when he had nothing for dinner but shellfish and water, closed his eyes and thanked God "that they were permitted to suck of the abundance of the seas and of the treasures hid in the sand!"

Did I not say that gratitude was an art? I have seen a crust of bread and a cup of tea awaken more gratitude than a twelve-course dinner!

If you are not grateful to-day, it will not be because you have no great table groaning with bounties and "money to burn;" it will be because you have not a grateful heart!

That would be uncharitable if it were not so strangely true. Just as some men's hope burns brighter in disappointment, just as some men's courage is greatest in danger, so some men's gratitude is deepest in misfortune!

There is food for thought! To eat that, might do some of us ungrateful people more good than a turkey dinner!

"Gratitude is the natural response of the heart to kindness received or intended"—intended, mark you. Who knows what kindness God intends in those troubles of yours?

LIII.

THE humorous and the pathetic have been strongly blended, in the efforts of men to accomplish the navigation of the air.

Herr Lilienthal is not the only inventor who has failed to realize his hopes. Not many summer days go by without beholding the death of some unhappy aeronaut. The tragedy of Dædalus is never long "off the boards."

If I were disposed to do so, I could tell a very good story of my own. For I, too, like every American boy, had my day with "perpetual motion" and "flying machines." And if, clinging to an umbrella handle, I jumped from a barn one morning, to see how a parachute worked, (and saw!), I am only one of a million who learned to "shoot the chute" long before the days of the Lagoon.

Nor is Darius Green, with his flying machine, the single aspirant to immortal fame upon the comic stage.

In one of the older Ohio communities the memory still lingers, of a venturesome lad who persuaded himself that he had solved the eternal problem of flying through the air.

Feigning sickness on the Sabbath day, he waited until the family had gone to church, and then fastened upon his shoulders a pair of enormous turkey wings. Ascending the roof of the wood-shed, he gave a loud gobble and boldly leaped into the air. An hour later, when they picked him up, he had just strength enough to blubber: "Well, if I had only jest had a tail I could have flew!"

Poor fellow! He only stood for a type of multitudes who lack but a single appurtenance, either tailpiece or headpiece, to enable them to accomplish their boundless ambitions.

I stood in the trackyard of the Texas and Pacific Railroad in the early days of Ft. Worth, when the "Lone Star" state was the paradise of adventurers and tramps.

Three human wanderers were lying on the floor of an empty box car, and one of them, taking off his hat, held it up to the gaze of his companions and said: "I wear the same sized hat as Daniel Webster, and if I had only had his voice I would have surpassed him as an orator!"

"If he had only had a tail, he could have flew."

If Goliath had only had a little thicker skull, he could have whipped David. If Lord Dunraven had only had a better yacht, he could have won the cup. If the Red

Stockings had only had a better team last season, they could have "flew" the pennant.

My little man, with legs, lungs, wings, and gobble, and every thing else that a turkey has but a tail, there is a long span between you and the bird!

But while we laugh, we can not restrain a sigh, for this incident brings us to the border land of the tragic.

Of how many human lives has it been true that the possession of one more organ, faculty, or trait would have enabled them to soar into the heavens of wealth or fame?

I have seen not a few people who, if they had had a little bit more common sense, or a little finer imagination, or a little better eyesight, or a little deeper voice, or a little keener digestion, might have taken their places among the immortals as poets, discoverers, singers, soldiers, statesmen, or orators.

When a broken-hearted man lifts up his head in the wreck of his hopes and ambitions, and sees with a clear vision "that if he had only had a tail, he could have flew," it is not altogether a laughing matter. "So nigh to glory is our dust."

One day a worm who was wearily crawling on the earth looked up and saw a butterfly sailing swiftly and joyously through the air.

“Ah!” said the worm, with a sigh, “If I only had wings, I, too, could fly.”

That night, spent with life's toil, discouraged by life's narrowness, he began to weave his own shroud. He felt the powers of his being mysteriously ebb away. He sank into a deep and peaceful sleep, and when he awoke, he, too, had wings.

LIV.

DID you ever pick up a hot copper?
I have.

It was when I was a Freshman in college.

An organ grinder had strolled into the campus with hurdy-gurdy on back and monkey on arm.

Traveling from one dormitory to another, he poured forth the melting sweetness of his lays, while some of the boys danced upon the green sward and others tossed peanuts, cookies and copper pennies to the weazened monkey, who transferred them to the hands of his master with a solemn dignity.

One of the pennies fell at my feet. I noticed that it dropped from a window of a Sophomore's room, but music had disarmed my suspicions.

As the monkey's attention was divided in many directions, he failed to observe the prize, and I stooped to pick it up.

Never shall I forget the sensation.

I rose into the air with a roar of pain upon my lips and a blister on my thumb and finger—I who had only that day translated from Virgil the immortal sentence:

"I fear the Grecians even bearing gifts."

Shouts of fiendish delight arose from the Sophomores, and my own classmates slunk away in mortification at my greenness. I stood first upon one foot, then upon the other, rolling my eyes a hundred ways in embarrassment, wringing my fingers in pain, and having only one consolation—that the innocent little monkey had been saved from suffering by my stupidity.

I did not dare say it then, for it was "give and take" in those days, but, looking back over those twenty years, I may say now that it was a shabby trick. And yet it was not without its value in the development of a poor little Freshman.

He has had his eyes open for "hot coppers" since then, and has been saved not a few burned fingers.

But who escapes them all? They look so innocent, and they seem sometimes to fall from the hands of angels in the windows of heaven. No wonder men pick them up.

Do you remember the fellow they used to call "Church Mouse" because of his poverty?

Five years or more ago a fortune of a hundred thousand dollars fell from the dead hands of an old uncle plump at his feet. Pick it up? Of course he did. But it proved to be a "hot copper," burned his fingers, his

pockets and his soul. The money has gone and Church Mouse has gone.

And, one day, when that fine young fellow Easygo was hanging about the lobby of — House, some one tipped him a wink and placed a glass of champagne upon the bar.

Pick it up? Yes. And they have picked him up more than once since then—in the gutter. Hot copper!

You remember Hail Fellow, and how a committee called upon him and offered him a job in the city hall? Who wouldn't have picked it up? He did. And do you know how long a term he is serving in the state's prison? Hot copper!

Shall I tell you one more story? It is about young Goggleeye. Little Miss Muffet seemed to flutter right down from the sky. She was all frills and laces, all airs and graces—the sweetest and most bewildering vision of loveliness that ever burst upon the eyes of man. Goggleeye was warned against her. His old father shook his head. His mother besought him to think twice. Some of his friends exhibited their scars.

But he picked her up, and a "hot copper" she was. He was plucky, though, and I only hope she will cool off as the years roll on.

"If hot coppers would only give some sign," you say.

Ah, they would lose their educative power if they did.

No one would pick up a red "hot copper."

If all the dangerous things in life were labeled: "I am hot. Hands off or I'll burn your fingers," fools would get along as well as wise men.

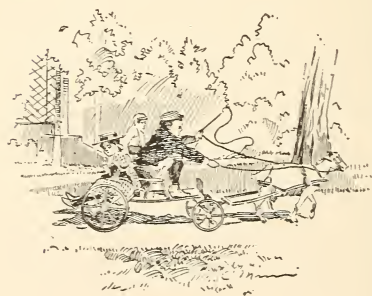
LV.

THE manufacture and use of slang is an evil.

But just as we think we have learned to hate it roundly, there darts into use, from a source as undiscoverable as that of a meteor, a new word or phrase so apt and expressive, that all our opposition goes down before it, and it forces its way up from the lowest philological circles to the highest, and finally, like a fixed star or a new constellation, takes its place in the firmament of our lexicons and "Familiar Quotation Books."

"Get a move on you," was such a phrase.

There is something irresistible about it. It is martial and imperative. It is brief, abrupt, and crammed with significance. The motorman shouts it at the farmer whose team obstructs the track, the hotel clerk shouts it at



the bell-boy who lingers on the stairs, and the policeman shouts it at the crowd which gathers around a dog fight. Every body says it to every body else who dawdles along the pathway of life.

Its significance and humor (for there is always an element of humor in all permanent slang), consists in its abrupt revelation of one of the fundamental laws of our being. We must "get a move on us" or be run over.

There is absolutely no way to stop. If the prizes to be gained do not beckon us onward, then the forces from behind will push us forward. It is sad, of course, but is funny too, as it is to see a woman driven along by a high wind, will she, nill she.

It is all right, for if our only motive power was what little inherent energy we happened to have, the most of us would make no more progress than the moss on a stone, or a bump on a log. We have to be roughly roused from our lethargy, and so our tireless, faithful mother, Nature, prods us with storms and frosts, with gnawing stomachs, and all the other wolves of desire and need which howl about our paths.

What would you be to-day if she did not follow you, incessantly crying, "Get a move on you?" Probably lying under a bread tree in a tropical climate, naked, inert, bestial!

Man's response to this marching order from the lips of his great All-mother affords an astonishing and amusing spectacle. How full the world is of stir and bustle, of men hurrying to and fro, darting like ants in and out of a hill, like bees to and from a hive.

How many things and people get a move on them in a great city like this! There goes a house, slowly and painfully creaking its way along. Yonder comes a fire engine, pounding and smashing a path through the crowded thoroughfare. Street cars dart past like great shuttles, bicycles scoot along like stiff-brimmed hats on edge before the wind, mighty horses snake great loads of coal, fleet roadsters pick their way through the crush, men and women and children go crowding, jostling, pushing, rushing, tearing along in streams, in waves, in tides of energetic, restless life.

It is an irrefragible law of nature that all triumphs come by trying, and all progress from earnest action. The ceaseless putting forth of endeavor, no matter how tired, how sad, how unwilling we may be, is the one unchangeable condition of existence.

Let us accept our destiny cheerfully, for this one day at least. Do not make drudgery of your task. You must do it whether or no, and you had better do it cheerfully.

If your work has been getting behind, pull it up.

If it has grown distasteful, so much the more reason for doing it well, so that a better task may be set you.

Be faithful. Be courageous. Be energetic. Get a move on you!

LVI.

SOME three weeks or more ago Dobson heard the subject of Christmas mentioned for the first time this season.

He had been expecting it, and was fully prepared.

His wife had provided an unusually good dinner, set his slippers before the fireplace, and lighted his pipe.

The children were in bed.

"Dick," she said, at last, "what about Christmas?"

"Christmas," he growled in a voice which he had carefully trained for the occasion. "Christmas! You don't mean to say that you have a notion of spending any money in that kind of Tomfoolery this year. We might as well come to an understanding at once. Times are too hard. If we get enough to eat we will be doing more than I expect. I don't want to hear the word Christmas again."

Having delivered himself of his oration in the very manner which he had fore-determined, he fixed his eyes upon the evening paper. But his mind was agitated, and he discovered at last that the sheet was upside down.

Next morning at breakfast the little Dobsons had the misfortune to begin to talk about Christmas.

"I'll nip this thing in the bud," said Dobson to himself.

Bringing the handle of his knife down upon the table with a crash, he roared in a terrible voice: "You may as well understand now that there are not going to be any Christmas presents this year, and the less you say about it the better!"

If he had said there was not going to be any more water in the river, nor any more oxygen in the air, they could not have been more astonished.

Things looked blue for a while.

But a few evenings ago Dobson reached home earlier than usual, and found his wife up to her knees in candy bags and tin soldiers and popguns, and heaven alone knew what else.

A thunder cloud covered his face.

"Dick," she said, holding up a little bisque doll, "don't you think the baby will squeal when she sees this!"

Something came up in his throat. But discipline must be maintained!

"Where did you get the money?" he inquired sternly.

"Do you remember that ten-dollar gold

piece you gave me on our wedding anniversary?" she answered. "I couldn't bear to think of the little children not having any Christmas, Dick, indeed I could n't. Bless their hearts. Not have a Christmas? I'd die first, Dick!"

The next day I saw Dobson down street blowing his money around like soap bubbles. He had been into every store in town. His legs were aching as if he had been playing football; but his heart was light!

He saw the pretty clerk cut off a piece of silk from a great roll which lay upon the counter, and his eyes danced.

"Mind you send that to my office," said he. "I don't want any blunders about this. That's a Christmas present for my wife, dy'e see?"

"I wonder if he has got a younger brother?" said the shop girl to herself, looking after the big fellow as he bustled down the aisle and out of the door.

Dear old Dick! You should have seen his "bear dance" this morning, when Jenny opened that package!

"Hurrah for Christmas!" he shouted, as the little Dobsons dove into their stockings.

He held Jenny back a little as the breakfast bell rang and the brood of joyous youngsters went tumbling down stairs.

"Say, Jenny," he whispered, "how did you manage to get away?"

"Get away from where?" she asked in surprise.

"Why, from the good place up above," he answered, pressing her against his left side with his big arm.

"What can you mean, Dick? Have you lost your wits?"

"Not a bit of it, old girl. But there must have been a great row up there when it got out that the star angel of the whole band had escaped. What brought you down to this cold world, anyhow, tell me that?"

"Oh," she answered, looking up archly from under her long eyelashes, "I saw a big, handsome, blundering fellow that needed a little looking after!"

"It will be a cold day for me when you have to go back," said he, with a suspicious quaver in his voice.

"Mamma didn't run'd away at all," said little Dick, who had fallen behind and overheard this tête-à-tête. "She just bringed heaven right down wiv her."

LVII.

THE stern pressure of life forces men into dread dilemmas.

This is one—for a freshman to be pulled out of bed at midnight and placed upon his study table by a band of sophomores, who order him to “tell a story, sing a song, or dance!”

“Horse play,” you say. Yes; but prophetic—rudely symbolical—after all. The same thing happens to a man a thousand times in after life—in a little different form. It is only another way of repeating that stern command of Nature to all her children: “Do something. Justify your presence! You may have a wide choice as to what particular thing you will perform, but something, you must and shall!” And it is this very imperative that “calls us out!” Twenty years or more ago a Grand Army lodge in a New Hampshire town determined to develop the talent of its members. They passed a resolution that every man “should tell a story, sing a song or dance.”

The results surprised them, but they ought

not, for talent lies buried in napkins everywhere.

The very first night a grizzled old private, whose tongue might have been carried away with a grape shot, so far as conversation was concerned, began a narrative in a simple, unassuming style, but as he continued to spin the delicate thread, his hearers held their breath, and Sheherazade seemed to have been reincarnated!

At the second session another genius was evoked. No one would have dreamed that there was any music in his soul. His companions had never even heard him whistle to a dog! But that evening when he lifted up his voice and sang "The Star Spangled Banner," the old veterans sprang to their feet and reached for their swords.

The third evening came, and every one thought that the talent of the lodge had been exhausted. But some one had to dance!

Out into the middle of the floor where the imaginary camp fire was burning lumbered the ponderous figure of a corporal who had taken on fat, and now tipped the scales at two hundred and sixty-nine. His great figure swayed to the music of the snarling fife a moment, and then he sprang to his work. The elasticity and suppleness of youth were in the legs of this Colossus. He leaped into the air,

he bounded, he whirled, he spun upon his toes like a dervish, he floated like a fairy, and the bodies of the astounded spectators swayed to his motions, while they clapped their hands and shouted.

We do not know what is in men, while they lie snoring in their beds like the freshman! They must be hauled out and set upon a table and hear the stern, imperative: "Tell a story, sing a song, or dance!"

Daniel Webster only paraphrased these words when he bade his countrymen "sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish."

Who can not remember some dramatic moment when the converging lines of events lifted him onto a table and confronted him with this dilemma?

Twenty years ago or more I forgot the manuscript of a sermon. The pulpit was my table. The people looked up at me and I had to do something! And so I preached!

Emergencies possess developmental force. They are men-makers.

Instead of regretting that the emergencies are so pressing, we might more wisely regret that they are not more so—if we care to know what tremendous possibilities lie dormant in us.

I know men who could lead an army to victory, sail a Cunarder across the ocean, manage

a college, or even run a newspaper—if they had to!

It is painful, of course, to be hoisted upon the table, hear the inexorable behest, and shudder at the effort; but many an immortal romancer, poet, or terpsichore has been born in the throes of that agony.

Come now! Begin. Recite. Sing. Dance. Do something, or make room for better men!

LVIII.

THERE often comes a critical moment in a ball game, when a glorious victory may be achieved by the players "bunching their hits."

The tide has been running against them. The umpire is partial or incompetent, their opponents lucky, their own men rattled, the spectators sulky, and an invisible force seems sweeping them to defeat.

Suddenly a stupid muff, or a lucky hit, places a couple of runners on the bases.

Now watch! They had been doing all they could; but summoning up from the depths of their being some balky reserve of strength, they force themselves to do more!

"Bunch your hits, boys," whispers the captain. "Line 'er out," yells the crowd. Smash goes the bat of the great Buck; crack, bang, pling, those of McPhee, Irwin, and Miller, and away go the runners, sliding, tumbling, stealing second, third—over the home plate! The game is ours, hurrah!

That's what comes from "striking while the iron is hot," from "spurting" at the critical moment, from "bunching your hits"

when the enemies' team is stupefied and helpless.

To possess a fund of reserve strength, after every ounce of power has supposedly been exhausted, to be able to summon it forth at the supreme instant, to know how to strike a few sharp and terrible blows when the enemy is dazed or groggy, this is often the secret of victory in the varied struggles of our earthly life.

The great end to strive for must always be the long, steady, powerful, tireless movement of muscle or of brain. Spasms of industry, epileptic fits of effort, are fatal to every player, as well as to every toiler.

But all movements of life are not alike. There come instants that are supreme; and when the tide that leads to fortune rolls in, the swimmer must have a few ounces of reserve strength with which to mount it and lay his hand upon its crest.

The existence of that reserve is a mystery.

The "Reds" were playing as hard as they could when the crowd cried: "Bunch your hits!" The boat crew was rowing its best, until its backers, with a wild roar of excitement, made it "spurt." The bicyclist was straining every nerve until his friends burst their lungs with that wild cry, "Scorch." The knight knew nothing of that hidden flame

of energy that shot from his soul, when, just as he was going down, he caught sight of a beseeching face and saw a scarlet ribbon fluttering down into the arena!

There is no more wonderful, as there is no more beautiful, sight in the world than that of a mother, whose every moment is absorbed and every energy exhausted in the ordinary daily life of her household, making that astonished discovery of her "hidden reserves" when the scarlet fever steals into her brood of little ones, and lays them low.

What she did before was child's play to the herculean tasks which she now performs. Where did she get that inexhaustible strength? God only knows, for He gives it.

It is a sublime comfort to believe in that hidden fund of power, in the new vein of gold into which the pick will strike just as the old one is exhausted—the new fountain that will burst forth just as the old one has gone dry.

"There is a divinity which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we may." There is also a divinity within us which gives us strength in every hour of need.

There are men who have "lain down" in these hard times just at the critical moment, when, if they had called out their reserves and "bunched their hits," they might have won a glorious victory.

LIX.

“ONE day at a time.” “Take no thought of the morrow.” “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” This is the true philosophy of our life.

To meet the trials and bear the burdens of earthly existence as if they all lay between the rising and the setting of a single sun is the privilege of manhood.

Who is there among us that has a burden which he could not bear for fourteen or sixteen hours, if that were all? But that is all, for life comes to us a single day at a time. At its close is that miniature of death—sleep. It is the “looking before and after,” the “pining for what is not,” that makes havoc with our peace. It is carrying the weight which was really taken from us yesterday, and bearing the one that will not be laid upon us until to-morrow, that robs life of its sweetness.

There is a vast difference between the load which an expressman's horse drew out of Avondale yesterday and the one he would have to haul if, like ourselves, he drew behind him all the trunks that were on his wagon last year

besides all those that will be piled upon it in the year to come! One load at a time is enough for him—the sensible fellow! If it is our glory that we are able to remember and to imagine, it is our shame that we so abuse those divine capacities as to make them the ministers of our most poignant miseries rather than our divinest joys.

Many readers of this morning's paper are saying to themselves, "I can not carry this load another day. My back is breaking with its weight, and I must lay it down."

Others have been struggling long against some terrible temptation, and on this morning have risen with a vague apprehension that before the sun has set they shall have succumbed.

Do not do it yet. You can bear it one more day. It is only a few short hours. You do not know what a day or an hour may bring forth. This day is short, and to-morrow may never come, or if it does come, it may bring surcease of sorrow.

Gird yourself once more for the battle. When David Livingstone was making one of his immortal journeys in the Dark Continent, his provisions failed, and he was reduced to the brink of starvation. There is not a murmur in his journal. He records the fact as if

it were a mere commonplace, and simply adds, "I tightened my belt."

You can do as much as he. Tighten your belt and go on. You will find a date-tree to satisfy your hunger, a fountain to slake your thirst, a river to float your burden, an herb to heal your wound.

All men are born to three things—labor, sorrow, and joy. Your cup is not filled with either one alone. There will be something of each in it, and you may be destined to find your joy at the bottom.

Tighten your belt and go on. Do not let this be the day that sees you, the kind and tender husband, repudiate your marriage bonds; you, the loving, dutiful son, renounce and betray your filial duty; you, the faithful clerk, deceive and betray your employer; you, the patient and gentle mother, give way to the flood of anger at those noisy little children.



It is only for one day that you must toil and struggle.

Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

LX.

MY friend Hopewell is one of those noble fellows whose diffidence keeps them from being known and appreciated.

"I was walking slowly along Fourth street the other day," said he to me, "when there passed by in the driving rain a man whose history I would give a good deal to know.

"He was holding a torn and faded umbrella against the storm with his right hand, and on his left arm he was carrying a little child wrapped in a threadbare shawl, out of a narrow opening in which, its weazened face peeped, and from the face two pitiful little eyes looked out upon the world.

"The man's clothing was old and shiny, his step slow and aimless, his countenance dull and hopeless.

"Something in the appearance of these two wretched figures arrested my attention and my steps. I followed them with my eyes until they vanished in the hurrying crowds. They keep stealing upon my memory as they stole upon my sight, shuffling in and out in such a wretched way that I am sure if their history were known it would be a tragic one."

“Why did you not follow them and ask him to give it to you?” I said.

“Follow him and ask him?” he answered, in surprise. “There is a certain sacredness in sorrow. There is a privacy in grief which ought not to be penetrated profanely. And, then, I might have been mistaken. Perhaps I was. At any rate, I wish he knew, poor fellow, how near he was to sympathy and help. I had a little money in my pocket and a little idle time on hand, and should have suffered less in actively helping him to bear his real burden than in this passive misery which I endure in thinking of him.”

“When you stop to reflect,” I said, “there is something pathetic in the fact that need and help, weakness and strength, pass so near each other so many times without meeting.”

“That’s it,” he answered, eagerly.

“There is Christian charity enough in Cincinnati to relieve every remediable pain in every human heart, if genuine need could be introduced to genuine pity and help. The one creeps in the by-ways, the other walks the streets. The one conceals itself, while the other seeks. What we really do see, is imposture. We are so often deceived, and at length we become hardened or discouraged.

“In the meantime, real need masquerades under a cheerful countenance, and help hides

behind an impenetrable one, and the two forms pass by, unconscious of each other's existence, the one perhaps dying with sadness or bursting with hate, while the other devours itself for lack of a true object to feed upon."

"And for that matter," I replied, "how near we all come to many good things we never really meet!"

"Just at the moment when that fine young fellow who killed himself the other day for lack of work passed a certain Fifth street store, the proprietor said to his bookkeeper, "If I could get the right man in that vacant place, I would give him a hundred dollars a month."

This remark almost betrayed Hopewell into telling something which I had long suspected.

"Yes," he said, in his quiet, absent way, "we all have heart needs and soul hungerings, and the tragedy of life is that we miss those who can satisfy them. I once saw a face for a moment which, if I could have seen every day, would have"—

He paused abruptly, extended his hand, and turned away without finishing his sentence.

Poor fellow! His life is incomplete.

Will all need ever meet all help?

Let us hope so—somewhere, some time.

LXI.

HE was coming back from a country spin. His progress along the Reading road was a painful one. Dripping with perspiration and too tired to walk, he was "pumping" as hard as he could, and bumping wretchedly along, while his rubber tire sucked and swashed beneath him.

"Mister, you've got a puncture."

"You've got a puncture, mister."

"How did you get that puncture, Cap'n?"

"Bad puncture, boss."

After hearing thirty or forty of these exclamations from small boys and corner loafers, poor Jones got mad, got off and pushed.

The pain of one puncture offsets the pleasure of five hundred safe trips, as every expert knows. But to poor Jones it came with all the force of a revelation.

There is only one thing in the world more helpless and miserable than a bicycler with a punctured tire. It is one of those frogs which lifts itself from the bottom of Mobile Bay to the surface, by distending its abdomen—when that great air sack is pricked by a pin in the hands of a darky fisherman.

The collapse is pitiful, and it would be wicked to laugh if it were possible not to.

It is a world of pricked bubbles and punctured tires.

Pharaoh "punctured his tire" at the Red Sea, Xerxes at Salamis, Napoleon at Waterloo, and Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Young Ferdinand Ward "punctured his tire" in the New York stock market, John Sullivan at New Orleans, General Coxey at Washington, and next June there will be dozens of punctured tires in the great political conventions.

The road to fortune is full of tacks, and the pneumatic tires of the ambitious go pop, pop, pop. The contestants start gayly forth in the morning of life, but come sadly back in the evening, and the merciless wits along the wayside greet them with the hated cry, "You've got a puncture, mister; got a puncture, got a puncture."

As if he did not know it, poor fellow!

I know whole troops of young men who are rolling along in their good clothes, with all the accompaniments of wine suppers and theaters, cutting a wide swath as they go, sought after, admired, caressed, but they are doing it all on wind.

Be careful, boys; there are tacks on that road—an angry landlord, a disgusted em-

ployer, a policeman in brass buttons, a fellow's cell, a drunkard's grave. You remember how the gamblers and the "fast set" punctured the Prodigal's tire in the far country? He walked home you know, and a long, hard trip he had of it. All he had in the world was company. The prodigal with the punctured tire is always sure of that.

I dread to see the journey of life made on wind. Take off your pneumatic tire for that trip and put on the one that is solid. It may not ride so easily, but at least it will not puncture.

Be careful on life's journey, son,
Of making great pretensions.
You'll "get a puncture," and you'll shrink
To pitiful dimensions.

LXII.

MAN is an animal who laughs, who weeps, and who builds artificial roads.

The last product of his genius is—the “cinder path.” In a new country he begins by following the trail of the wild animals through forests and over mountains. He widens this into a bridle path, a wagon road, and finally the bed of a railway. The deer is the first and greatest civil engineer.

The macadam, the granite, the asphalt pavement, even the magnificent cracked rock, cedar-tied, steel-railed highway of the New York Central pale before the splendors of the cinder path.

No one has fully measured the possible joy of life until he has taken a ten-mile spin over a cinder path on a high-g geared, well-oiled, pneumatic-tired bicycle. Nothing but the flash of a salmon up the Columbia, or the flight of an eagle over the summits of the Rockies, can be placed in the same category. Horse-back riding is mere jolted misery by comparison.

Such a path connects Clinton with Utica. It is less than twelve inches wide, and looks to you, when your wheel first strikes it, like the

rope on which Blondin crossed the Niagara river. "How can I keep my wheel on that black silk thread," you say, and you shudder at the thought of meeting a "scorcher."

Away you go like an arrow shot from the bow of Apollo. The rubber tire hisses and sings as it grips and spurns the cinders, with a music like that of water splashed from the prow of a yacht.

You brush your hat against the boughs of overhanging apple trees. Chickens cackle and scramble from under your wheel as if it were a colossal hawk. The farmers' wives run to the window; but before you can mutter "rubber neck," they have been left in the remote background. A yellow dog plunges under a fence and makes one vicious snap at your calves; but before he can open his jaws again, you are in the next township. Ambitious lads and superannuated old men have built booths along the path, and you catch glimpses of ginger ale and lemonade, which tempt, but can not stop you. The weeds on the sides of the path, bent by the swirling air currents, make you gracious courtesies as you sweep along. So nod the daisies, the buttercups, the milkweeds, the burdocks and the thistles—of which Margaret Warner Morley says: "Every thistle is a revelation and every burdock is a psalm!" You catch glimpses of the brilliant crimson of the

ripening wild cherry and the delicate green of elderberry blossoms. Odors of new-mown hay in the meadows and carnations blooming in the flower gardens steal gently into your consciousness. Butterflies wobble, swallows skim, yellow birds billow through the air. The meadow lark and the bobolink, the quail and the robin fling you song wreaths as you pass. Now you grit your teeth and clutch your handle bars and scream "half-road," as some reckless youngster goes sprinting by, and then you plunge into the gutter at the peril of your life to give the entire path to a young girl, whose cheeks are aflame with the glow of health, and think yourself more than paid, as the soft tones of her "thank you," sweeter than bird notes, fall upon your ears.

Clinton, New Hartford, Utica. Nine miles in forty minutes (or thirty, if you are an expert). Solomon in all his glory, nor Cæsar in all his power, ever experienced a pleasure like that of the bicycle fiend on the cinder path.

No loaded wagon;
Nor "copper's" wrath;
Stops the "scorcher's" scorch,
On the cinder path.

We are behind the times in Cincinnati, and will be until we have cinder paths to Hamilton and New Richmond.

LXIII.

I HAVE recently made the acquaintance of a gentleman by the name of Mr. Phil. O. Sophor, who literally finds books in brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

Like the goat, whose powerful digestion enables it to extract nutriment from every object in nature and every article of commerce, no incident is too trivial, no fact too stubborn, to furnish him food for thought.

With a bug upon the end of his finger for his text, he will read you a lecture fit for the halls of a university. He would be a sage in a palace, like Marcus Aurelius, or a savant with a shackle on his leg, like Epictetus. He can sit all day in the shade of a tree listening to the song of the birds, or stand calmly in the center of the ring on the Stock Exchange, when chaos reigns and prices go down like the crash of worlds. He is a ripe man, ripened all through, and not by a worm at the core; but by sap and sun. Gentle and calm as he is, there are times and places where he fires up, being like a friction match, which ignites when rubbed over rough spots. But whatever befalls him, he perpetually seeks the "Sophos"—the wisdom

that surely lies imbedded in the passing experience, thinking, like the bee, that there may be honey in every flower, or like the prospector, that there may be ore in every hill.

Sometimes he is profound, sometimes pathetic, sometimes humorous; but more often simply cheerful.

He sat upon the bank the other day, while the boys were wading in the Oriskany, such a sunny smile playing over his face as was basking upon the countenance of his great mother, Nature. In fact, the resemblance between the mother and her son has often been remarked.



I suppose, said he, that this little river seems many miles in width to the little Brownies who are paddling through its riffles. And the summer afternoon (too short for me), seems like a long eternity to them. Experience is our measuring rod, and these little men are like a surveyor who is trying to get the area of a field

without a chain. I shall never forget a little minnow which I caught upon a bent pin in the brook that babbled through my father's farm. His nibble felt like the snap of a shark's jaws. The sheen upon his silver belly as I whipped him out of the water outblazed the light of the moon. He looked longer to me than the forty-pound muskallonge which I caught last week in the St. Lawrence river. I started home on a run, with my eyes protruding from my head, the fish rod over my shoulder, and the poor little minnow dangling in the air, sincerely believing that I had caught a whale.

So many things in life look smaller and less desirable now than in childhood that one can not help wondering whether the total result of life's experience is to find that in proportion as we are little and young, all things seem great and good, and in proportion as we are big and old, all things seem poor and mean.

When little Billie out there in rush of that riffle stands beside the Mississippi, the Amazon or the Yukon, they will seem like tiny brooks compared with the Oriskany as he sees it now.

Is his experience symbolical? I say, "no," up to this point of life's journey. (Who can vouch for his sentiments to-morrow?) I say, "no," because while some horizons shrink others expand. While some lines shorten others extend. The finite and the temporal may at

times seem narrow and unsatisfying, but evermore the infinite and eternal widen and deepen and lay hold of me with an increasing power. As I wade out into the ocean of these great thoughts—"What is life?" "What is it for?" "What is its destiny?" "What is my duty?" "What is the nature of God?"—I thrill with a wonder such as little Billie can not know, and there come moments of rapturous contemplation of the future, such as dwarf his highest ecstasies.

"That sounds more like religion than philosophy," said I. "Philosophy is only the adolescence of religion," he replied.

LXIV.

THERE are many statements in the plays of Shakespeare which have all the virtue of infallibility, without being burdened with the proof of a claim to verbal inspiration.

Every body knows that "the man who hath no music in his soul is fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils."

Possibly he could be pardoned for not loving the complex harmonies of Wagner; but how can he hope for mercy if he does not love the songs of birds?

Clinton is a veritable paradise for those ethereal beings in whom power, grace, joy, and beauty have attained their consummation. At 5 o'clock in the morning, the air is all a-quiver with their jubilant melodies.

Phoebes, yellow birds, robins, orioles, pee-wees, high-holders, sparrows, thrushes, and cat birds are twittering, bubbling, and gurgling in a chorus that lifts the human heart out of its sadness and bears it into the calm of another world. Below these shriller voices, like the sub-bass of an organ, you hear the call of the chanticleer, the quack of the goose, and the gobble of the turkey.

I stand on the dewy lawn and look and listen as I never looked and listened to Thomas' Orchestra in the great Music Hall.

Yesterday morning a thrush dropped like a distilled globule of sunlight out of the heavens, lighted upon the topmost bough of a maple tree, and, standing like a prima donna in the presence of all the crowned heads of the universe, lifted up her voice and sang until her little body quivered with passion and she seemed almost ready to dissolve in the unendurable rapture of life.

Who can measure the joy which bird songs have communicated to human hearts? I think that five per cent of the entire pleasure of many lives could be credited to their account. I am sure it was so of the former mistress of this house. The birds knew her benignant face. They almost pecked the crumbs from her generous hand. They poured their richest melodies into her appreciative ears. It would have been more dangerous for a boy to have killed a bird in this door-yard than for an incendiary to have fired the house. Now that she is gone, they sit in the tree-tops and fill the air with tender plaints.

Have you ever cast up your own account with the birds and tried to measure your obligations to them?

For myself, I have few memories that lie

beyond the first nest I saw the robins build, and the first songs I heard them lift above the heads of their young.

Think of the invalids whose dearest companion is a canary, from whose palpitating throat they hear the only sound that soothes the perpetual throb of pain. Think of the sad widows, the lonely spinsters, the disappointed lovers who turn to a parrot or mocking bird for fellowship and sympathy.

No doubt it was a bird which awakened the soul of music in the breast of Tubal Cain or Orpheus. Whoever the first musician was, he was provoked to cut a reed in the swamp and make a hollow pipe to imitate the melting lay or wild, unearthly trill which he heard warbled in a tree-top or flung down from the dome of heaven.

But birds were not only the teachers of music. They were also the inspirers of poetry. Literature does not contain richer treasures than the poems suggested by the ethereal life of these inhabitants of the air. The shifting clouds, the rising and setting stars, the brooks, the mountains, the gray old ocean, the variegated flowers, the multitudinous emotions of the soul, the pageantry of life have all conspired to arouse the imagination of poetical utterance. But not one of all these mysteries has stirred it more deeply than the birds. It

was the cuckoo that agitated the depths of Wordsworth's soul, the thrush the heart of Drummond. The bobolink, the swallow, the nightingale, the robin, the pelican, the owl, the wild duck have, by their songs or cries, awakened immortal echoes in the spirits of Hewitt, Bryant, Shakespeare, Arnold, Burns, and Shelley.

“ Better than all measures
Of delightful sound;
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the
ground.

“ Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then as I am listening
now.”

They have taught us to wonder, to dream,
to sing, to aspire—and now they are slowly
teaching Lillienthal to fly!

LXV.

“**I** MUST draw the line somewhere,” said the trout, as he felt the fisherman reeling him in, and started for the cover of an old log.

“I must draw the line somewhere,” said Mrs. Partymaker, as she kept thinking of one person after another whom she wanted to invite to her reception, and then counted the money which she had saved for the caterer.

She knew, as every one knows who gives a party, that some one will be forgotten, and many must be ignored. But what are we to do? Our houses are limited in size, our purses are limited in depth, our strength is limited in amount. We can not ask everybody. We must draw the line somewhere.

With what boundless confidence we begin life!

Who ever felt its fetters in his youth? Who ever feared its limitations? And who can not remember those first bitter experiences when he made the discovery that there was something which lay beyond his power?

Every man is bound with a cord which he tightens beyond the stretching point, and

which brings him up at last with a short turn whether he will or no. Beyond its limit he could not go if he would.

But there are voluntary as well as necessary limitations, and every man must draw the line for himself, and say to his soul imperatively ten thousand times: "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

When Miss Society Bud came home from boarding-school and plunged into the social swim, she meant to take in every reception, every party, every theater, every concert of the season. But one morning her aching head and pallid cheeks taught her a lesson. She took her pen and wrote a half-dozen regrets, saying pathetically: "I must draw the line somewhere."

When young Spread Eagle drew his first month's wages, he thought they would buy every suit of clothes on Fourth street, hire any amount of "liveries," and enable him to see the "elephants." In a few short days he awoke from his dream, rubbed his eyes, looked over his account book, and said, with a sigh: "I must draw the line somewhere."

And so must every one—even Sir John Lubbock, who finds time and strength to do a great banking business, study the habits of ants, and write essays on the philosophy of life; and Gladstone, who can chop down forest

trees, run a government, write a theological treatise, or turn you off an essay on the ancient Greeks with one hand tied behind his back.

There are some men who seem to be unusual geniuses; but from the depths of their eager, yearning hearts, the sad sigh bubbles day by day: "I must draw the line somewhere."

Yes; if you wish to do any one thing well, you must turn your back upon a thousand others. Deny yourself. Restrain yourself. Limit yourself. Concentrate yourself. Such are the constant whispers of that wise old mother, Nature, to her children, as they gird themselves for the struggle of life, for she wishes them all to win.

But do not you be frightened by imaginary lines! They say that if you draw a chalk circle around a goose, the silly thing believes itself to be surrounded by an impassable wall!

I know many men and women who might range a vast deal farther than they have gone among the accomplishments and duties of life, but for their timid, silly notion that they were shut in by insuperable barriers—which exist only in their imaginations.

"I must draw the line somewhere," whispered the Angel of Death gently to poor Dob-

son last night, and he looked up pitifully and pleaded, "My work is not yet done." He closed his eyes a moment, a tear stole from under the lashes, and the watchers heard him murmur, "God knoweth best."

LXVI.

“WHAT’S the matter with your lawn,
William?”

“Too many trees,” said the old gardener, leaning on the “spud” with which he was patiently digging out the dandelions and the plantain. “You can have your choice,” he continued, “between shade and grass, but you can’t have both, and thereby hangs a tale.”

“What tale?” said I, pulling a daisy to pieces and saying to myself as I dropped the petals :

“Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief,”

falling instinctively into a forgotten habit of childhood.

“The tale of all our human life,” he answered ; “for we are perpetually forced to choose between the horns of dilemmas. We are shut up to alternatives. The whole process is one of selection and exclusion. ‘We can not have our pudding and eat it, too.’ We may have the sleep of the laboring man, or burn the midnight oil of the scholar. But we can not have both the sweet repose of one

and achieve the brilliant discoveries of the other. We can not enjoy the obscure happiness of private life and the mad excitement of public life, the wild pleasure of dissipation and the calm peace of righteous living. We can not have the shade of a forest and the thick greensward, on the same lawn. Sooner or later we must make our choice."

The old man turned back to his work, and, picking another daisy, my mind pondered his words, while I mechanically repeated he old formula :

" Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief."

Right you are, William. It is a life of selection and exclusion. No one man can have every thing, and be every thing. The man who strives to grasp all will embrace none. There is no other right way but to choose with deliberation our course of life, concentrate our energies upon the attainment of the prizes and the pleasures that belong to it, and turn away from the rest without a sigh.

In the mad desire to drain the cup of life, to exhaust its pleasures, to compass its entire round of joys, multitudes of aspiring natures become bewildered, and, striving for every thing, lose all, like an old hen who scrabbles about the barn-yard, pecking the other fowls to keep them from eating her corn, until in

trying to gobble every kernel, she actually seizes none.

Such men sink into fatal habits of uncertainty and irresolution. They skip from one thing to another, as a bobolink flies along a rail fence, fluttering from one stake to the next, and never resting upon any.

Young man, what profession are you going to adopt?

What business are you going to follow? You have reached an age when every hour of indecision counts against you as a deadly loss. Choose!

What recreation can you legitimately allow yourself? Have you time for photography, bicycling, gymnastics, music? Which? You can not do every thing. Choose!

What path of life will you follow? The straight one that leads to life, or the broad one that leads to death? Choose!

“How long halt ye between two opinions?” shouted the enraged old prophet to a race of people who had sunk into this state of irresolution. “If the Lord be God, follow him, and if Baal be God follow him.”

Nothing is so hard as to make a deliberate choice between two pleasing alternatives; nothing so fatal as not to!

You may be sure enough that men like Cæsar

and the young Alexander did but little fluttering. They chose their stake, and lit!

They did not pull the daisies to pieces as I am doing, leaving their destiny to be decided by some association with a lucky petal.

Superstitious? Yes, so they were. But ir-resolute? Never!

When they came to their Rubicons or their mountain passes, their mighty intellects gripped the practical problem, and solved it. Their iron wills decided.

“Veni, Vidi, Vici,” I came, I saw, I conquered, said the indomitable Cæsar. Go you, and see, and conquer.

“Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief.”

Throw your daisy down and choose!

LXVII.

THE great Pasteur was dining.

His scrupulous care in washing in a tumbler of water the cherries which he was eating, made him the object of a mild ridicule by his companions.

He defended the wisdom of his precautions, launched into an argument to prove the existence of animalcules which infest the surface of all fruits, and solemnly advised his hearers never to take a bite of any one of them without having cleaned it thoroughly in water.

The argument excited and heated him. He suddenly seized the glass in which he had been drowning the microbes, and drank the contents at a single draught!

Two thousand years ago the Divine Master warned his disciples against that pharisaical zeal which led men to strain out all the little gnats in their beverages and then swallow a camel—hoofs, hide and hump.

The idiosyncrasies, the absent-mindedness and the hypocrisies of humanity lend a perpetual point to the warning, and demand its ceaseless repetition.

One day St. Beauve went out to fight a duel.

A gentle rain was falling, and as the great critic took his place and cocked his pistol, he carefully held an umbrella over his head.

His anxious seconds remonstrated with him for an act which imperiled his life.



“I am quite willing to be killed,” said he, “but I can not bear to be wet.”

Some people are very particular about little things.

There is Jack Pott, for example. He is punctilious enough about his gambling debts, and rolls up his eyes in horror at the very thought of not canceling them to the last penny; but to my certain knowledge he has broken all but one of the Ten Commandments without so much as winking an eye.

It is well known that Mrs. Finicky first boils the Ohio river water and then filters it for fear of the microbes; but she also eats lobster salad and Welsh rarebit at ten o'clock at night, dances sometimes until morning, and laces until a full respiration is an impossibility.

I have heard that Queer Stick doles out the

matches that are used in his princely establishment, as the steward on a becalmed schooner doles out the biscuits to a starving crew, and that he spent \$10,000 on a wine supper and has often been seen lighting his cigars with \$20 bills.

It is more than a rumor that Deacon Square Toes, who has not missed a prayer-meeting for twenty years: treats his employes like galley slaves, rents his buildings for unmentionable uses, and can no more look a subscription paper in the face than he could an enraged tiger.

It is not easy to be consistent. In fact, it is the harmless inconsistencies of human nature that lend a never-ceasing charm to its contemplation. Without them the humorists and satirists would have no target for their shafts, and half the fun of living would be gone.

The wisest of men will often, in moments of abstraction or vanity, commit the folly of Pasteur or St. Beuve, to the infinite delectation of their immediate friends or to the students of history.

But for all genuine and downright infractions of the law of the Master, let us cherish a genuine and downright contempt.

Away with the man who stands in public upon all the minutiae of etiquette, and in his private life breaks every holy social law.

Down with the one who haggles for trifles in ritual and doctrine, but tramples upon the law of liberty and love.

Men who wash the microbes from their cherries and then drink the dirty water, who who strain out the little gnats and swallow down the camels, who refuse to wet their clothes, but who are willing to be shot at—bah!

We have a right to demand of each other a consistent life. A public opinion that exalts it is just.

LXVIII.

AN animated debate was in progress.

It had wakened the canary, which was singing vociferously. The skye-terrier stood between the two speakers, wagging his stumpy tail, looking anxiously from one to the other, and emitting an occasional yelp.

Tompkins had collected an old debt by due process of law, and the question was, "how shall it be invested?"

He was for depositing it in the savings bank. She in a Persian rug.

"It will not draw any interest lying on a parlor floor," said he, sarcastically.

"It will excite some," she replied.

"What is money for?" he asked, snappishly.

"To buy pretty things," she answered.

"I say it is to live on when you are old, and if you had to work for it as hard as I do, you would know its value," he retorted.

"If we always did your way," said she, relenting a little, "we never would have any thing new or nice at all. Every thing would be old and shabby, and by and by no one would cross our threshold."

"Let them stay away, then. Old things suit me well enough. A thing does n't have to be all varnish or luster to give me pleasure. I

like signs of wear and use. A few cracks and stains do not detract from the charm of any household goods, any more than a few gray hairs and a little incipient wrinkle detract from the beauty of woman," he answered, without looking up, which, if he had done, the debate would have ended, for it was neatly said, and Fannie had reached the age where it meant some thing.

"Thank you," she answered, humbly, "but you know that if I err on my side, you do on yours. What sort of a home would we have had if I had always let you have your own way? I know money is hard to earn, but people must not fossilize. They must have new things and pretty things. What were our tastes given us for, if not to develop and gratify? It would be as wicked to let the eyes or hands atrophy for lack of use, as to let our love of the beautiful become extinct."

"Let it feed on nature and on itself," he said. "I can have just as glorious dreams in a bare room with a crust of bread and a pitcher of water as I can in an art gallery or a French restaurant. The soul may become surfeited as well as stimulated by works of art and luxury. Look at old Stuffedup. He stands ogling his pictures and statues through a lorgnette, and sees nothing but dirt and dollars. I see more beauty in life every minute than he does in a month."

"You dear old thing," she said, moving her

chair and taking his hand. "Of course you do. But not every body has your self-inspiring, self-sustaining power. Half the time, I think, you would get just as much pleasure out of reproducing me before that frightful imagination of yours as you do out of the flesh and blood reality.

A pantomine followed this remark. The conversation became subdued. The canary fell asleep. The terrier sank down upon his ottoman, the man philosophized.

"My dear girl, I am a conservative and you are a radical. I believe in accumulation, and you in distribution. I am a Puritan, and you are an Aristocrat. I believe in getting the most out of what I have, and you believe in getting what you have not got. I am the incarnation of contentment; you of restless, striving discontentment."

"These two spirits have always struggled together and always must. Civilization is the product of both, not one alone. And so is this little home of ours—which is far more important. Advancing life is the result of a parallelogram of forces. Every thing is the effect of a compromise."

"Yes, dear," she answered, with that smile which poor Tompkins felt as frost does sunlight, "and we will compromise on the rug."

He drew a sigh—and a check.

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